Julia St. Pierre: a tale of French revolution



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# JULIA ST. PIERRE.

### A TALE

OF THE

### FRENCH REVOLUTION.

### LONDON:

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### JULIA ST. PIERRE.

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### FRENCH REVOLUTION.

#### CHAPTER I.

THE TWO FRIENDS .- NUPTIAL PREPARATIONS .- FIRST INDICATIONS OF A STORM.

THE morning to which the commencement of our present narrative belongs, was that upon which were to be solemnized the nuptials of Charles Delmar and Julia, the sister of Victor St. Pierre. The latter was the owner of a handsome mansion, and tolerably extensive estate in the Province of Louvain, and, though young in years, was a great favourite among his neighbours, on account of his uniformly good conduct and generous disposition. The expectant bridegroom was also wealthy and much esteemed, so that the approaching marriage was looked forward to with the liveliest satisfaction by the villagers, who made all the preparations

that their humble means would allow to give eclát to the joyous occasion.

The attachment between Delmar and Julia had commenced when they were children together, but about three years previously to the time of which we are now writing, she had been seen by a wealthy young gentleman in the neighbourhood, who made proposals for her hand to her brother. At first his pretensions were absolutely rejected, but Monsieur Mordaunt, for that was his name, was not easily to be defeated in any project that he he had formed, and as it shortly afterwards happened that he saved the life of Julia when the horse she was riding had run away, he urged his love with so much earnestness, that at length a reluctant consent was given, and from that moment he prosecuted his suit with untiring Julia always received his visits with marked coldness, but he was indifferent to everything except the gratification of his own caprice, and caring very little in fact, for the object of his persecution, he determined to make her his wife in order that he might afterwards have the opportunity of returning the contempt with which it was easy to see he was regarded. He had, beside, a mortal dislike to Charles Delmar, and how, he thought, could he better revenge himself than by preventing a marriage upon which depended all the happiness of his rival?

At length business of an imperative nature demanded his presence in the Isle of France, where he had extensive plantations, and he urged with the strongest persuasion that the nuptials should take place before his departure. To this, however, Julia would not consent, and after every argument that he could use had proved unavailing, he was compelled to embark for the long voyage that was before him. Six months after, a letter was received from him announcing his safe arrival at the place of destination, and promising, as his business would be soon arranged, to return home by the next vessel that sailed, and then, on his arrival in Louvain, to claim the hand which had been promised him. Twelve months, however, passed away, without bringing any further tidings of Monsieur Mordaunt; and as a vessel from the Isle of France had in the interval been lost, together with the whole of the crew and passengers, it was supposed that he had perished on that occasion. Another year elapsed without bringing any intelligence of him, and then, as no doubt of his death remained, Charles Delmar once more resumed his addresses to Julia, and, as was mentioned at the commencement of this chapter, the day for the celebration of their nuptials arrived. Victor St. Pierre was anxiously expecting the appearance of his brother-in-law, and was leaving his mansion to go and meet him, when a stranger approached and announced himself as the valet of Monsieur Henri Mordaunt. The person thus addressed started when he heard that name pronounced, and with some agitation, inquired if he came to confirm the rumours which were abroad respecting the death of his master.

detected, "I am the messenger of very different news, I assure you, Mensieur Mordaunt lives, and will be here presently to claim the hand of the young lady whom he wooed ere he went abroad."

"'Tis false!" exclaimed St. Pierre, with agitation. "There is some trick in this, to impose upon me and defer a ceremony which is appointed to take place

this very day."
"Nay," answered the man, "a very short time will serve to convince you that I have spoken the truth; Monsieur Mordaunt is now on his way here, and having heard that his intended bride is to be given to another, he is determined to insist on the fulfilment of a promise, that he is resolved shall not be violated. He arrived at his mansion scarcely an hour ago, and having heard of what is about to take place, I was despatched hither to give notice of his intention to come and enforce a claim that nothing will ever induce him to give up."

"Then he is too late," returned St. Pierre, "for when, after receiving no intelligence of him for two years, no doubt remained of his death, my sister received the addresses of another person, and this day has been appointed for their

marriage."

"But surely, sir, since one of them must be disappointed, the lady will not cast

off the man whose addresses she first accepted."

"My sister will be the best judge of her own actions," answered the other, "but I scarce think she will now give the preference to a lover, who for two years has not thought it worth his while to correspond with her."

"That is a seeming neglect, that I dare say my master will be able to explain

to her satisfaction."

"But how?" asked St. Pierre, "will he be able to prevail upon his rival to sur-

render up the bride, whom he has wooed and won?"

"It is not for me to argue on that point, sir," replied the other, "but my master is not easily to be turned from his purposes, and I have a notion that if fair arguments should fail, he'll not hesitate to have a recourse to violence."

"Then return to him," exclaimed St. Pierre, "and tell him from me that I for-

bid his presence here."

"That is a message, that in his present temper, I should not like to convey to

"Then will I send one of my own servants with it."

"Really, sir," answered the man, coolly, "it would be unless to do that, for by this time my master cannot be far off, and even if your messenger chanced to meet with him, he would not prevent the visit he intends to pay you."

"Has he no regard for the feelings of her whom he has professed to love."

"The best proof of his love," answered the other, "is in the fact, that he is still determined to make her his wife. Had he been as fickle as you imagine, he would have married one of the wealthy heiresses that he met with while abroad. In short, there can be no doubt that he is passionately attached to your sister, and his feelings can be imagined when, on his return home, the first news that reached his ears, was that his betrothed was about to give her hand to another."

"Be that as it may," exclaimed St. Pierre, "it is now too late to break the promise that has been given to his rival. If there is any blame in the matter it rests entirely with himself, for had he written to us, I would never have made myself a party in this unfortunate business. He, however, will see the dilemma in which he has placed us, and if he possesses a particle of feeling, he will submit

to a sacrifice that, after all, I believe will not be a very heavy one."

"You don't know him quite so well as I do sir, or you would hardly expect him to give up the young lady to a rival that he has always looked upon with hatred."

"And why should he hate one who is loved and respected by all the neighbour-

hood ?"

"I can best answer that question myself," exclaimed Monsieur Mordannt, stepping from behind some shrubs which for the last few minutes had concealed

You look confounded by my appearance St. Pierre, and well you may, for my presence was little expected at the moment when your treachery was about to be consummated."

"I know not what you mean by treachery," returned the other, "for that which was about to take place this day was in consequence of your own unpar-

donable silence for a period of two years."

"Leave us, Robert," exclaimed Mordaunt, motioning for his servant to depart, and then, being alone, he added with forced composure :- "St. Pierre, it is in vain to make paltry excuses when there is no palliating the perfidious act of which you have been guilty. I have, however, returned in good time to mar your plottings, and my rival must look to himself if he would still venture to stand between me and my betrothed bride."

"Surely," answered St. Pierre, "you will not insist in enforcing your claim when all is prepared for the ceremony, and even the hour has arrived for the union

of two fondly attached hearts?"

"Then I, it seems, am not to be considered at all in this affair?" returned the other with a sneer. My feelings are not to be consulted, though I love the girl quite as much as Charles Delmar can do, and have besides the girls' own promise that she would be mine."

"And she would not have broken her pledge," answered her brother, "but that she believed that you were lost when the ill-fated vessel, in which you were

supposed to have taken your passage, went down."
"But I can understand though," exclaimed Mordaunt, "what little grief was felt at my supposed loss, or she would not so soon have accepted the addresses of another."

"Two years have passed since you were expected home."

"Suppose it had been ten?" exclaimed Mordaunt, "ought I to have been given up because a rival chose to place himself in my situation? But I am not here either to reproach or argue with you, St. Pierre. You have always known me for a man of resolution whenever I had a point to carry, and on this occasion you will find that no means will be left untried to secure my revenge upon those who would have robbed me of my bride."

"Do you mean to threaten me?"

"No," he replied, "for I can execute my designs without having recourse to In a word, you are in my power."

"Thank heaven, things are not quite so bad as that!"

"Indeed! A few days may serve to convince you that I have made use of no idle boast. With the means and the inclination, St. Pierre, it will not take long to reduce you from a state of affluence to one of poverty."

"Nay, that is happily beyond your reach."

"It is both practicable and easy, I can assure you," he replied. "This estate, and it is all the wealth you possess, is held under the Dauphin of France, during his royal will and pleasure. A word to your prejudice whispered in his ear will be sufficient to procure your dismissal, without even the smallest compensation."

"But he will not exercise such a right without having previously received

provocation." "He is more easily persuaded than you imagine," replied Mordaunt, with a malicious grin. "My father was one of his tutors, and an especial favourite. I myself have been fortunate enough to receive distinguished marks of his royal favour, and an interview was never denied me whenever I solicited me. I will away to Paris—see his royal highness, and so represent a case to him, that you shall be tarned out of house and home, to wander through the world a miserable

"Monster!" cried St. Pierre; "if you have indeed this power, would you

exercise it to bring ruin upon me?"

"Why should I not?" he asked, "when by so doing I can secure my revenge against a man who has assisted to wound me in the most sensitive party

you I have no feeling, that I can see my betrothed given to another, and he, of all men, the one that I have most hated and despised. However, I have now said what it is in my power to do, and it only remains for you to say whether you are ready to come to terms with me."

"What terms do you allude to?" asked St. Pierre.

"Oh, they are easily enough complied with, I assure you," he replied. "Use your influence to prevent the marriage that was to have taken place this day; forbid my rival ever to see your sister again; and insist upon her fulfilling the contract she has made with me. You surely have influence enough to do that, and upon these conditions you will remain master here without any interference on my part."

"But my sister will never consent to dismiss the man to whom she is so warmly

attached."

"Then she will have the satisfaction of seeing her brother brought to ruin by her obstinacy. However, my opinion of her is different to yours, and I believe, if you tell her exactly how you are situated, she will reject this Charles Delmar in favour of myself."

"And even if it was so," exclaimed St. Pierre, "is it likely that her affections

could be placed upon the man who has obtained her by such means?"

"I care not for that," answered Mordaunt; "let the girl be mine, and if she loves me not, it will cost no great pain to part when it is discovered that, though married, we are not exactly well matched. So now, St. Pierre, you know my views; perhaps you think not over well of me for having conceived them, but I care so little for the world's opinion, that I can without reluctance cast it to the winds rather than be defeated in an affair upon which I have set my heart."

"How long do you give me to consider your propositions?"
"Not ten minutes," answered Mordaunt. "In a short time the expectant bridegroom will be here, and if once he has an interview with Julia my hopes will be at an end."

"But I must see my sister upon the subject."

"That I have no objection to. See her if you think proper, but understand, any resistance that may be offered must be overcome. And that, I should think may be easily done when you tell her that ruin immediately follows her refusal to become my wife. Or perhaps," he continued after a short pause, "it would be better for me to see her upon this subject, since I can more clearly explain how the affair will terminate if she madly resolves to drive me to the last extremity."

"But she knows not yet of your return, and the sight of you. without some

previous intimation might have the most serious effects upon her."

"Leave that to me," exclaimed Mordaunt, "and I'll take care not to present myself before her without intimation being first given of my intended visit. And it is to be hoped I shall find her not inclined to be obstinate, for so surely as she shows any scorn when my proposition is made known, I will seek the revenge I have spoken of."

"Enter my house then," exclaimed St. Pierre, eagerly, "for yonder I see Charles Delmar, coming this way, and I dread the consequences of a meeting under such circumstances as these. Away! and let me entreat you to spare the feelings of my sister, for dearly she loves your rival, and it is therefore little to be wondered at if she demands time to consider the subject you are about to broach to her."

"Her answer must be upon the moment," exclaimed the other, "for I will submit to no delay now that I have been so nearly tricked by the woman who was betrothed to me; when I left France the understanding between us was that the marriage should take place immediately upon my return. I am here; I find all the preparations complete, and the nuptial shall this very day be performed, only that I instead of Charles Delmar must stand in the place of bridegroom."

St. Pierre would have entreated for some little delay, but ere he could make the appeal, Mordaunt hastened away, and entered the house, Distracted with what had occurred, the other was about to follow him, but at the moment Charles

Delmar approached, exclaiming—

"What means all this mystery, my dear Victor? Instead of being greeted with smiles and congratulation, I find you agitated as if the stranger who just now left this spot had made some fearful disclosure."

"Stranger!" cried St. Pierre. "Did you not recognise him?"

"I thought the form familiar to me," replied the young man, "but his back was towards me, and I cannot even guess who he was."

"Then prepare yourself for an announcement that all your hopes are de-

stroyed."

"For Heaven's sake keep me no longer in suspense!"

"The man you saw just now was your rival."

" Henri Mordaunt?"

"The same; he whom we thought dead has returned to claim the hand of your

betrothed."

Charles stood transfixed to the spot, without power to utter a word, or even to follow the man whose unexpected presence had occasioned the destruction of all his fondest hopes of happiness. At length, however, somewhat recovering himself he gasped forth a few words, demanding why his rival had entered the house.

"Alas!" groaned St. Pierre, "I know not how it is, but I felt powerless in his presence. He demands the hand of my sister, and denounces vengeance

against us if she does not this very day accompany him to the altar."

"Julia become the bride of that man?"

"Such is his resolution," answered St. Pierre, "and he boasts of having it in his power to reduce me to the lowest state of beggary if she refuses to comply."

"And you," exclaimed the young man, "you St. Pierre, will second his pre-tensions rather than risk the vengeance with which he threatens you?"

"What was I to say? How was I to act?" demanded the other in accents of grief. For myself I would have risked even his worst revenge, but I alone should not have suffered, for he has the spirit of a fiend working within him, and would have poured forth all the malice of his heart upon you and Julia, had I offered any resistance to the project that has so unhappily brought him here at such a moment."

"Have you consented to his marriage with your sister?"

"I have not," answered St. Pierre, "but of what avail will that be if he intimidates her into a promise to bestow her hand upon him."

"I will myself prevent the sacrifice."

"You, Charles?"

"Aye, he has no claim to her after the coldness and neglect with which she has been treated. By his own act it was that she was led into the belief of his death, and now that her hand has been promised to me I will save her from him, even though I perish through the treachery of the man who would compel her to become his."

"Hear me!" exclaimed St. Pierre, "and do not involve yourself in a useless contest with one who will hesitate at no means that he thinks will further his own ends. I myself will see him once more and endeavour by all the arguments I can use to turn him from a purpose that he himself, upon reflection, must repent."

"And why should not I see him as well?" demanded Charles Delmar, "Is not this quarrel mine more than yours, and shall I stand idly by when it is my sword that ought to punish him for the affliction and terror into which he is about to plunge your sister."

"Your sword!" exclaimed St. Pierre, "have you forgotten then that he had

the reputation of being one of the most successful duellists of the day."

"I remember his prowess well," answered the young man, "but am not such a coward as to let that circumstance weigh with me when I find that he is warring against a helpless woman. I will therefore seek the villain, challenge him on the spot, and should it be my fate to fall, I shall at least, have the satisfaction of

knowing in my last moments, that I die to save Julia from the arms of an unprincipled villain.

"By heavens! you enter not the house for such a purpose," exclaimed St.

Pierre, grasping him firmly by the arm.

"Release me, Victor!" cried the young man, struggling to liberate himself, but in vain.

"I will not," he replied, "till you have promised not to seek a quartel with this man. You are too hot and impetuous, Charles, and little think of the agony and alarm your violence would occasion my sister. For her sake, and in her name, I implore you not at present to seek your rival. I shall soon hear from Julia what has passed, and then we will together form our own plans for the defeat of Monsieur Mordaunt. Remember, my dear friend, it is for Julia's sake that I ask your forbearance!"

"For her sake!" he exclaimed. "Ah, Victor! you have conquered me, and I yield !"

"Then I release you from my grasp," returned the other, "for a pledge once given by you is, I know, never broken. We will now therefore wait for a brief period, and when I have learned what has taken place at this interview, we will together discover some means or other to save my sister from becoming the wife of this man. So leave this place for the present, whilst I go in to hear what has transpired, and when that has been ascertained I will meet you by the gate of St.

Mary's Convent, and relate all that I have heard."

Taking the silence of Charles Delmar for a consent to this arrangement, he hastened towards the house, uncertain what course to pursue under the difficult circumstances in which he was placed. When he was gone, the young man was about to pursue his way towards the appointed place, when he saw one of the domestics leave the house, and move towards the spot where he was standing. The thought then prompted him to enquire of the man if he knew what had occurred, and advancing to meet him, he questioned him as to whether Mon-sieur Mordaunt had been permitted to have an interview with the young

"Oh yes, sir," he replied; "he was with her some little time, and I'm afraid what passed was not very agreeable to ma'amselle, for we heard her sobbing violently, and by the tones of his voice we could clearly enough understand that

he was making use of all sorts of threats."

"And were there none among you to hasten to her rescue?" demanded Charles

reproachfully.

"Why, the truth is, sir," replied the man, "Monsieur Mordaunt gave us fair warning that if any one entered the room, till he had left it, he would run him through the body—So knowing what he used to be before he went abroad, we thought it would be of no use risking our lives until there should seem to be real danger to our young mistress."

"Had he left her presence when you came away?"

"He had, and mortal fierce he looked too, I can tell you."

"What became of him afterwards?"

"He went into another room with my master, and they are talking together now."

"And your young lady ?"

"Is still in her own apartment, and I dare say frightened enough she is; for who would have expected to see him at such a moment, when everybody said he had been drowned, which I could almost find it in my heart to wish had really

"Do you think I could get to her without being seen?"

"You might do it certainly sir," replied the man, "but I would not advise you to try it."
"Why not?"

"Because you might happen to come across Monsieur Mordaunt, and he's

such a terrible fellow, that I should be afraid of the consequences."

"Pshaw! he is but a man — has but a man's strength, and, though somewhat my superior in swordmanship, I dare stand face to face with him in such a cause as this."

But it would only be adding to the trouble of my young mistress, if any mishap was to befal you."

"The risk shall be run at any rate," exclaimed Charles; "in which room shall

I find her?"

"She's in the parlour in the west side of the building; the same room where you have so often sat with her, talking about love and happiness, and little dreaming that such a change as this would ever take place."

"Where are your master and Monsieur Mordaunt?"

"In the study."

"Then I can pass in without fear of being seen?"

"Oh yes; I don't think there's much chance of that, sir," replied the man, but if you take my advice, you'll not enter the house just yet, for if you should happen to meet Monsieur Mordaunt, and a quarrel should take place, my poor young lady will be more frightened than she is already, and that's needless."

"At any rate," exclaimed Charles, "it is my duty to be near, in case she

should need my protection."

"But her brother is there," observed the man; "and he has an arm stout enough to defend ma'amselle if the other gentleman don't mind what he's about. Besides, it's to be hoped he'll be able to talk Monsieur Mordaunt into a little bit of reason, and then your marriage may after all take place presently as if nothing had happened."

"I will go to her at all events," exclaimed Charles Delmar, "for I fear my rival is not so easily put aside from his purpose, and rather will I perish than see my destined bride forced to the altar by one whom she has never regarded with any other feeling than that of dislike. He has come purposely to thwart my happiness; but let him beware, for I will resist him to the very last!"

With this he passed onwards, in spite of the remonstrances of the man who followed closely at his heels, and soon entered the mansion where so much, alarm

had been suddenly created.

#### CHAPTER II.

MEETING OF THE LOVERS .- JULIA'S VOW. THE INTERRUPTION AND ITS RESULT.

Having made his way through the entrance hall, Charles Delmar took the passage which led towards the western apartments of the mansion, and on reaching the door of the room in which he had ascertained Julia was, he paused for a few moments, half afraid to present himself too abruply before her. A death-like silence, however, prevailed, and at length, mustering resolution, he gently turned the lock, and immediately stood in the presence of his betrothed. She was kneeling before a crucifix, and so absorbed in the outpouring of her heart, that she was unconscious of his being near, till he had approached within a few paces, when springing upon her feet, she rushed with a faint exclamation of mingled joy and fear into his arms.

"Dearest Julia," he exclaimed, "I am here to save you from the villain, whose unexpected return has filled your bosom with so much grief. Rely upon my protection, and you shall yet be saved from him, who loves you not, though he is here to claim your hand in marriage."

"Alas!" she cried, "you know not the danger you run, by thus venturing

into my presence. But now he vowed vengeance, if ever I met you again, and every moment I am expecting his return to insist upon my accompanying him within this hour to the convent chapel."

"Have you then promised to do so?" asked her lover in a tone of re-

proach.

"Believe me I have not," she replied; "I told him I would die rather than prove false in my vows to you."

"Yet still his heart remained obdurate?"

"He is determined, he says, not to resign me to another; but it yet remains to be proved whether I am to be dragged unwillingly to the altar."

"It must not, shall not be!" exclaimed Charles. "Your brother is at present your natural guardian, and surely he will not lend himself to a sacrifice that would bring bitterness and sorrow on your future life."

"Poor Victor is, I am afraid, powerless," she sighed, "for my prosecutor boasts that it is in his power to drive him forth houseless and a beggar into the world."

"It may be so," answered her lover, "but surely Victor would rather put his threats to the test, than sacrifice you to so consummate a villain."

"He will, he will!" cried Julia, "but confident in his own powers of persuasion my persecutor is now gone to insist upon the performance of the contract made before he left France. That Victor will not submit, I firmly believe, but my heart tells me that I ought not to plunge him in ruin when by a a word I can prevent it."

"And that word is --"

"To consent to our immediate union."

"Can you then consent?" asked Delmar, reproachfully. "Will you forsake

him who was this day to have received your vows at the altar?"

"Alas!" ske sighed, "driven as I am to a fearful alternative, how otherwise can I act? Mordaunt is deaf to all my entreaties and has sworn to proceed to the most fearful extremities rather than suffer me to become the bride of another."

"But in your brother and myself you have two protectors who will lay down

their lives in your behalf."

"All efforts to relieve me from the oppresser would be in vain," she replied. "You, dear Charles, would perish by the secret hand of an assassin, and my brother

be deprived of all he possesses in the world."

"For myself," he replied, "there is not much to fear, for being aware of his intentions I can guard against any treachery that he may put in practice. Victor is equally aware of the enemy he has to deal with, and may counteract the insidious attacks that are levelled against him. You spoke just now of his being driven forth to beggary, but he owes nothing to Monsieur Mordaunt, and is therefore, so

far out of his power."

The base in heart are never in want of the means when they have a purpose of their ewn to serve,"answered the afflicted girl. "My brother, as you are aware, holder his property, all that he possesses in the world, under the Dauphin, but in such a manner that he can be deprived of it without notice, or any cause being assigned. Mordaunt boasts of having great influence with his Royal Highness, and by means of some artfully designed falsehood will prevail upon him to deprive Victor of the lands which constitute his means of existence. Such I have gathered from the words of my persecutor himself, and I ask you, Charles, whether I ought not to yield rather than bring ruin upon a brother whom I tenderly love?"

"It might be your duty to do so," he replied, "if by yielding, you could avert the threatened danger. We, however, know the character and disposition of this Monsieur Mordaunt, and believe me, Julia, if he is bent upon the destruction of your brother, he will not relinquish his purpose, even though you comply with

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the terms he has proposed."

"You would have me, then, boldly refuse to become his wife?"

" I would."

"In that case he would immediately set out for Paris to fulfil his treacherous design."

"Let him do so," answered Charles, "and I would take instant steps to counteract it."

"How ?"

"By going also to Paris, and opening the eyes of the Dauphin to the infamous plot that has been formed for the ruin of my friend."



"The intent is a generous one," she sighed, "but I fear the journey would

be profitless."
"You think then that his Royal Highness would commit an act of injustice without condescending to hear the other side?"

"On the contrary," replied Julia, "I have heard that he is humane, and easily accessible to all who seek an audience with him. You would, therefore, doubtless be honoured by an interview, but your representations would be of no avail after the artful tale related by my brother's enemy."

"Nay," exclaimed her lover, "I feel assured that nothing will be more easy than to foil the base plot threatened by this Mordaunt. Say, therefore, that you will put my words to the test; defy my rival when next he comes to hear your final determination, and all will yet be well."

"Ah, I dare not venture to refuse him! My heart sinks within me at the bare

thought!"

"Remember, Julia," exclaimed her lover, "everything will depend upon the firmness you display at your next interview. Yield, and you are for ever lost;—reject his propositions—defy his utmost malice, and I pledge my word most solemnly that your brother shall not become the victim of his foe."

"How am I to be assured that you can defeat the machinations of so formidable

an enemy?"

"There is no time to enter into an explanation now," answered Charles; but I entreat, dearest, by all the love you bear me, that you will put my promises to the test. Treat with scorn the threats of my rival, and, by all my hopes of happiness hereafter, I swear you never shall have cause to regret."

"How-how shall I decide?" cried Julia, in perplexity.

"Let it be in favour of my proposition," he exclaimed, "or my happiness as well as your own, will be wrecked for ever. Pause not—waver not, dear girl, for remember, upon the least appearance of hesitation, you will this day be forced to become the bride of Henri Mordaunt."

"You have prevailed!" she murmured, after some brief deliberation. "For your sake, Charles, I will dare the violence of this man, even though my compliance was

insisted on at the dagger's point."

"Fear no violence of that kind," exclaimed her lover, "for I and your brother shall be at hand to protect you in case of need. He may, perhaps, try to frighten you into compliance by threats, but further he dare not go."

"For myself I have no fear," answered Julia, "and since you have almost convinced me that you will not suffer by my refusal, I now solemnly swear to you before high Heaven, to die rather than prove false to him whom I was this day to have wedded! My vow is registered, dear Charles, and no force or violence shall ever make me forget it."

"Say you so!" exclaimed Henri Mordaunt, who at that moment rushed furiously into the room. "Am I to be defied, scorned by the woman whose brother is in my

power?"

"We are lost, dear Charles!" cried the maiden, olinging to her lover for

support.

The rage of Mordaunt was now excited to the highest pitch, and springing forward he forcibly dragged the almost fainting girl away, and flung her with brutal violence upon a couch at the further end of the room. Then, drawing his award, he

menacingly approached Charles Delmar.

"For you," he exclaimed, "I have no words to express the scorn and hatred that I bear towards you. We are mortal fees, and your blood alone can appease the furious wrath that your pretensions to this girl have given rise to. Draw and defend yourself, sirrah, or like a coward as you are I will lay you a corpse at the feet of yonder unfaithful girl."

"Any where else, I am ready to meet you foot to foot, and sword to sword!"

answered Delmar, returning the scornful glance directed towards him.

"And why not at this moment?" demanded the other.

"Because I fight not in the presence of a woman," answered Charles Delmar.

"The cowardly excuse shall not serve you," exclaimed Mordaunt fiercely, "you have endeavoured to win from me the affection of my promised bride; I heard her vow never to become mine, and she shall now witness the terrible certainty with which I can hurl punishment upon those who act treacherously towards me. Once

more I say defend yourself, for you have roused my fury and I am in no humour

to parley with the man I loathe and execrate."

"Again I say I will not cross swords with you here," answered Charles, "follow me from the house, and in a cause like this I will never yield but with death."

To protect himself, however, in case of a sudden attack, he drew his weapon, and stepping back stood upon the defensive. Mordaunt eyed him with increasing hatred, and at length exclaimed in a tone of bitter irony:—

"So it seems, young sir, that though you have the meanness to rob me of the mistress of my affections, you have not the courage to defend yourself when

detected!"

"Choose some other time and place," answered Charles, "and I will prove whether I deserve the name of coward. Nay, I am ready now, if you will follow me into the park, where we may settle this dispute without fear of interruption."

"I see your drift, sirrah," exclaimed Mordaunt, "and will take care not to fall into the snare you would lay for me. You have doubtless friends enough about who have come to witness the celebration of your nuptials. They would interfere to save you from my wrath, and thus you would obtain the credit of having accepted my challenge, though in truth you have not the courage to dare my fury."

"Your sneers, sir, will not move me from my determination," replied Charles,

with as much composure as he could assume.

"Then will I try other means," exclaimed the other furiously, "defend your-

self, or like a coward as you are, I will slay you where you stand!"

Upon uttering these words he sprang forward, and would have accomplished his threat had not Charles Delmar skilfully parried off the thrust that was aimed at his heart. Roused from the state of insensibility, Julia flew from the couch to throw herself between them, and at the same moment Victor St. Pierre rushed into the room and with a blow from his own sword instantly disarmed them.

"What madness is this," he exclaimed, "are you both so forgetful of yourselves that you would enter into deadly strife before a female, and beneath the roof of

the man you call your friend?"

"The quarrel that took place is little to be wondered at," returned Monsieur Mordaunt, gloomily, "when it is considered that I overheard him just now endeavouring to persuade your sister not to listen to my addresses."

"And why should she listen to them," demanded Charles Delmar, "when her

heart is altogether opposed to a union that she never freely consented to.

"Peace—I entreat both of you to forbear speaking any more upon this subject," exclaimed St. Pierre.

"In other words," said Charles, "I am no longer to lay claim to the hand of your sister."

"Pity me, my dear friend," he replied, "for you see the difficulty in which

I am placed, and it is cruel to taunt me with that which I have not the power to prevent."

"You see," exclaimed Mordaunt, addressing his rival in a tone of triumph, "that it is in vain for you to oppose me any longer. This young lady is my betrothed; you would have deprived me of her had it not been my good fortune to return home in time to prevent your union. The past, young sir, I can forgive, but beware how I again find you endeavouring to thrust yourself forward at my expense."

"Your threats I despise," answered Charles, "she never will be yours."

"Indeed! and how know you that?"

"Because she has solemnly vowed, and called Heaven to witness that she will prefer death to breaking the promise she has given me."

"Ah! but upon reflection she will think better of that."
"Reflection," exclaimed Charles, "what time has she to consider the proposi-

tion, when you have insisted that she shall become your wife before this day

comes to a close?"

"The interval is quite long enough," returned Monsieur Mordaunt, "for the promise of her hand was made before I quitted France, and the understanding between all the parties was that our marriage should take place immediately upon my arrival here. Two long years have I been in captivaty among the Arabs, and now upon my return home I find that my promised bride was upon the point of bestowing her hand upon another."

"That," exclaimed St. Pierre, "was because no doubt was entertained of your

death."

"And as little doubt is there," answered the other with a sneer, "that all here rejoiced at the opportunity it afforded of breaking faith with me. However, I have happily escaped the fate that was anticipated, and here I now am to insist

on the fulfilment of the promise made ere I went away."

"I have but one more question to ask," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre. "You seem determined to persist in laying claim to the hand of my sister, but cre you obtain my consent you must upon your honour declare to me that you are actuated solely by your love for her."

"His honour!" cried Delmar, scornfully; "can we rely upon that which we

know he has not?"

"Young man," exclaimed Mordaunt, "you must not try my patience too far, for though I wish not to create any further disturbance whilst we remain in this house, I will not suffer myself to be insulted with impunity. Before long I dare say we shall meet again, and then if time and place should suit the occasion, you will find me prompt to resent any such remark as you have just made."

"Come Charles," said St. Pierre, taking his arm and trying to lead him from the room, "I would speak to you in private. Follow me and I will give you the best explanation I can, of the position in which I now find myself

placed."

"And leave your sister with the man whom she fears more than any

other!"

"Julia has no occasion to fear me," retorted Mordaunt, "for have I not professed my love to her, and is it likely that I should exhibit either anger or violence, when I am anxious only to convince her that I am not unworthy the kindly feeling I seek for?"

"The young lady sir," answered Charles Delmar, "is already aware of how

far you are deserving of her esteem."

"If her opinion of me is unfavourable," retorted the other sharply, "there can be little doubt that I owe her altered sentiments to your friendly interference. However, enough of this—I have no wish to carry the quarrel any further, and if I am urged to retaliate, Monsieur St. Pierre and his sister will do me the justice to acknowledge that I have done what I could to restore harmony."

"Aye, after having been the means of destroying it."

"It is not in my nature, certainly, to lie down and be trodden upon," answered Mordaunt, "but otherwise I am not aware of having done anything to deserve all this ill-nature. Chance, it is true, brought me home just in time to prevent your marriage with my betrothed bride, and for once in my life I have to thank Fortune for having so far favoured me. I have claimed the hand which was promised me some three years since, and for having done that, I have incurred all this anger from the man against whom I have most cause to complain."

"My dear Delmar," exclaimed Victor, "why seek to prolong an angry contest that may provoke another quarrel? Come with me, and I will relate the position into which I have been forced by the events which have just occurred."

Without offering any resistance, or indeed making a reply, Charles almost mechanically followed him, without trusting himself to direct a parting glance towards Julia, who, terrified and weeping, sat upon the couch, her face buried in her hands. For a moment even the harsh nature of Monsieur Mordaunt scemed

to melt as he gazed upon the sorrowing girl before him, but at length resuming all his former firmness and resolution he approached, and taking her hand in his,

"For what are these tears shed, Julia? Has my return brought with it so much grief that you must needs show by every means in your power how un-welcome is the presence of the man you have pledged yourself to marry?"

"Oh!" cried Julia; "in mercy leave me, sir!"

"Sir! why this coolness and formality?"

"Indeed, indeed, I know not what I say," she exclaimed. "All I request is that you will leave me for the present, and when we meet again I may perhaps be able to speak with more composure upon those circumstances which have occasioned all this trouble and perplexity."

"If there is any explanation to be given," returned Mordaunt, "there is no time like the present. After a long absence I have found you on the point of bestowing your hand upon another, and surely I have a right to demand why you have forgotten the vow made to me before I went away."

"Alas! that yow was extorted from me."

"It was asked for, I admit," exclaimed Mordaunt, "but never would it have been demanded had I not believed that there was a rival who would have the

baseness to take advantage of my absence."

"If it is Charles Delmar whom you accuse of baseness," she exclaimed with firmness, "it is nothing more than a duty I owe to him to declare that he never renewed his addresses till the news of your death appeared to be confirmed. Then believing me to be disengaged, he made an offer of his love, and was accepted."

"And but too cheerfully, I have no doubt."

"I have nothing but uncharitable surmises to expect from you," she replied, "and will therefore submit to your insults without deigning to notice them any further. It is, however, well known to all whose good opinion is worth deserving that I remained faithful to the promise given you till the time arrived when, from your not having written, there was every reason to believe that you had perished in the vessel that went down. Two years from that time have elapsed, and at last, yielding to the earnest solicitations of my brother as well as Monsieur Delmar, I consented that no further delay should be asked for, and this day would have seen me the wife of another, had you not returned at the very period you did."

"You speak of my not having written," said Mordaunt, "and probably some blame may be thrown upon me on that account. You, however, will see how impossible it was for me to do so, when I inform you that I was in the ship which went to the bottom, -was thrown upon the coast of Barbary, and falling into the hand of some Arabs, was detained in captivity among them. For nearly two years I remained in bondage, but at length an opportunity offered-I escaped, and after incredible hardships and wanderings, succeeded in landing once more upon my native shores. So now you see, Julia, how little chance I had of sending to inform you of my hard fate."

"Could you not have written," she asked, "when you arrived at the French

"I could have done that, certainly," he replied, "but intending to lose no time in pursuing my journey homewards, I knew that I should reach here as soon as a letter did. I therefore borrowed sufficient money of an acquaintance, who resided in the town where I had landed, and having exchanged my miscrable Arab garb, for the costume of my native land, I hired post-horses and set forth for home, little dreaming of the surprise that awaited me there. So now, Julia, you surely cannot any longer wonder at not having heard of me for two years."

"I absolve you from all blame on that account," she replied, "but I must claim the same lenity for myself, and Monsieur Delmar, neither of whom could

have supposed the fate you had been enduring."

"There is but one condition upon which he and I can ever be friends," he

exclaimed. "Let him at once resign all pretensions to your hand, and the enmity between us ends."

"Alas!" sighed Julia, "you do not then remember how hard it is to give up

those whom we love."

"It may be hard," answered Mordaunt, "but as I was your first accepted lover, it is his duty to resign you, whatever pain it may occasion him."

"But he is called upon to do it so suddenly."

"Yet it must be done," exclaimed Mordaunt, "or this quarrel may have a fatal ending."

"Surely you do not mean to challenge him?"

"That will depend entirely upon the course he thinks proper to adopt," returned the other. "I have no wish unnecessarily to risk my life in a duel, but if he stands in my way as a rival, I shall not hesitate about what means I take to rid myself of him."

"Ah! your words are dark and threatening!—Surely you would not become

an assassin!"

"Not a murderer certainly," he replied, "but there are more ways than one

of getting rid of a man when we begin to find that he is in our way."

"I began to hope just now," exclaimed Julia, "that your former violent temper had been subdued by the troubles you have endured. Now, however, you come forth once more in your true character, and from this moment I forbid you ever

again to enter my presence."
"You forbid!" laughed the other, scornfully. "Think you then I shall release you from your solemn promise made to me before I left this country, merely because you have taken it into your head that my manners are à little too rough for your more gentle nature. No, no, Julia, flatter yourself not with the notion that I am to be cast off like one unworthy of you, so make up your mind to accompany me this night to the altar in the Convent of St. Mary.'

"Think you, then," she asked, "that my brother will consent to the sacrifice of

my future happiness?"

"Your brother, proud one, cannot help himself!" exclaimed Henri Mordaunt, in a tone of derision. "He is too much in my power to interpose in an affair of this kind, and will think, wisely enough, that so long as his sister is married, it matters little, whether I or my rival, Charles Delmar, possess you for a a wife."

"It is plain you know not my brother, or you would not believe him thus care-

less of my happiness."

"But I can judge of him by the rest of the world," exclaimed Mordaunt, "and I think there are very few men who would blindly involve themselves in trouble, merely because a woman calls upon him for aid, when there is no need of it."

"Victor," she replied, "promised our father upon his death-bed, that he would be as a parent to me, and afford his protection, so long as I required it. Heaven knows I need it now, and if my brother should prove forgetful of his duty, I will remind him of the solemn pledge which it would be sacrilege to break. But why need I speak thus, when I know that he would rather yield up fortune, nay, life itself, than give his consent to a marriage, against which I felt repugnance such as I now experience."

"Foolish girl!" muttered Mordaunt, "do not force me to an extreme that I

would avoid,

"But I do dare you," she exclaimed, firmly, "and to Heaven, I look for strength in the hour of need."

"Then you have forgotten your promise made to me."

"I have not forgotten that we were betrothed to each other," she repleed; "but I remember also that your long absence absolved me from that pledge, and having since given my heart to one who I loved long ere you made an offer of your hand, I will now rather take the veil, than become the wife of one whom I feel no regard for."

"You confess then that you do not love me?" exclaimed Mordaunt, foaming with rage.

"I never did regard you with any other feeling than that of dislike," answered Julia. "You have now heard the truth, and if you have any esteem for yourself

you will henceforth cease to urge me upon this point."

"Very well," he replied, "I shall speak to your brother upon the subject, and if his opinion upon the matter coincides with your own, I will take care that he remains but a short time longer the master of this estate."

"And so," cried Julia, bitterly, "you think to gain the sister's favour by utter-

ing threats against her brother."

"A truce to this subject, for I am weary of it," exclaimed Mordaunt. "Henceforth you must forget Charles Delmar, for this night, whether willingly or not, you stand beside me at the altar of St. Mary's convent."

"So then," she exclaimed, "you believe I have no longer a protector to guard

me against your violence ?"

"I know there are two that would be very glad to interfere against me," he replied, "but both of them know that I am not to be trifled with in an affair of this kind. The engagement between you and I was entered on long enough ago, and no one will dare say that I have not both right and reason on my side, even though I have claimed my bride at the very moment when she was about to pronounce her vows to another. On the other hand, though, people enough will be found to say that you were rather in too great a hurry when you promised yourself to another merely because nothing had been heard of your affianced husband for a period of two years. However, I wish not to reproach you now that the mischief has been prevented; so be prepared to meet me this evening, and make me the happy man I have so long expected to be on my return home."

He waited for no reply, but leaving the room, went in search of Victor St. Pierre, whom he also desired to prepare all things in readiness for the marriage that was to take place that evening. This done, he hastened to his servant, who was dispatched to engage a monk to perform the nuptial ceremony.

#### CHAPTER III.

A CONSULTATION, - MATTERS ASSUME A STILL MORE GLOOMY APPEARANCE. - THE FATHER CONFESSOR.

AFTER Mordaunt had left him, St. Pierre fell into a train of thoughts that were anything but pleasant, since, do what he would, the two persons whom he best loved were on the eve of being rendered unhappy for ever. That the person who had just parted from him would not yield his pretensions was now but too certain; he had expressed a determination not to give up the alliance with Julia; and his threats to bring ruin on the family would be easily accomplished if once he made up his mind to set about the villanous scheme he had projected. St. Pierre was anxiously considering all these things over in his mind, when he was interrupted by the entrance of Charles Delmar, whose pale countenance, and looks expressive of agitation, proved the violence of the grief which recent events had produced upon a mind that but an hour or two before was filled only with thoughts of happiness' and joy.

"Having seen Mordaunt just now leave you," he said, "I have ventured to intrude myself upon you once more, to know if you have succeeded in prevailing upon

him to yield up the hand of your sister to me?"

"My dear fellow," replied the other, "I am as much perplexed about this unpleasant affair as you can be yourself, but the truth is this, Mordaunt is not to be moved by any proposition that I can make. He is determined to marry Julia, and just now left me, expressing his determination to meet her at the altar this very evening, and in the event of her disappointing him he will immediately depart for Paris, seek an interview with the Dauphin and secure his revenge by having me turned out of the estate, which I hold at a mere nominal rent under his royal highness."

"And do you think," asked Delmar, "that the heir to the French thronewhom all the world reports favourably of-would act the part of an oppressor

against a man merely at the instigation of another."

"Monsieur Mordaunt possesses great influence over him."

"That may be, but he has too high a sense of justice to commit such an act as this, unless sufficient grounds are given for depriving you of your heritage."

"But I believe Mordaunt is capable of committing any act of perjury rather than

not carry this point."

"Then we must prepare ourselves to defeat him," exclaimed Charles Delmar; "and I know not of any better way than for you and I to seek an interview with the Dauphin, and explain to him the motives that have induced my rival to adopt so vindictive a course. He will do justice between us, and Mordaunt will find himself defeated when least he expects to witness our triumph over him."

"You are still sanguine in this affair, I see," returned Victor St. Pierre; "but I fear you are doomed to meet with the most bitter disappointment, even were such a course taken as you have proposed. Your rival, however, will not give you the opportunity of interfering, for he has resolved to marry my sister this very night, and his servant, Robert, has been sent I believe, to give notice to Father Boneffe, the confessor at St. Mary's convent, to say that his services will be needed in the chapel this evening."

"And have you made no attempt to prevent an union that must prove the source of such deep affliction to your unfortunate sister?" asked the other, re-

proachfully.

"I have remonstrated," he replied, "and in forcible terms pointed out the cruelty he is inflicting upon one whom he professed to love. This I did not half an hour since, but I might as well have talked to the air, for he only laughed at the words I uttered, and said she would be reconciled to the marriage when she finds there is no alternative."

"Perhaps he thinks that, in your own heart, you are not altogether averse to the

inion."

"Nay," exclaimed St. Pierre; "surely my dear friend, you have not that opinion of me. You know my friendship, Charles, and never did I feel more gratified than when first I heard that my sister had promised you her hand. I thought the happiness of both would be secured by it; and little anticipated the affliction which would befal you, through the return of him whom we imagined to be dead."

"Would," sighed Charles, "that our marriage had been solemnized ere he ap-

peared among us."

"In some respects I wish so too," replied Victor St. Pierre; "and yet on the other hand you would by that means have made an enemy who would never have been at rest till he had hurled destruction upon all who were concerned in his disappointment. I know this man better than you do, my dear Charles, and depend upon it, had your nuptials been celebrated, your rival would have had a terrible revenge."

"Do you then imagine that I am no match for him, if I saw reason to believe

that he intended mischief?"

"The truth is," replied Victor, "you would not have had an open enemy to deal with, but a concealed one, who had watched his opportunity till the intended blow was certain to take effect. So at least, I judge from the character he used formerly to bear, and if we may form an opinion by what has recently taken

place, I am afraid long absence has not had the effect of softening down his rugged disposition."

"I am afraid," said Charles Delmar, "he believes you are easily to be intimi-

dated by his threats."

"Nay, there your suspicion wrongs me," exclaimed the other, "for few persons possess a smaller share of fear than myself, and I believe no one knows that fact better than does Henri Mordaunt. Some few years since he and I had an affair of



honour together, and he afterwards admitted that I had acted with as much bravery

as ever he had witnessed in the whoe course of his life."

"Ave," answered Delmar, "none I am sure could accuse you of cowardice, nor did I myself imply such a notion; but the truth is, Mordaunt knows your attachment to the place of your birth, and he thinks to mould you to his will by this

threat of his of having you driven from this mansion."

"It is not only the being driven forth as a beggar upon the world," answered St. Pierre; "but if I should be rendered incapable of paying the few debts I have

contracted, my creditors will have the power of seizing my person, and by the laws of our country they may keep me in prison for many years to come. This, I own, is a thought that has filled me with alarm, and almost any sacrifice must be made to escape a doom that I so much fear."

"But my purse should ever be at your command."

"My dear fellow, I know your goodness," exclaimed the other, "but I am too proud to subsist on charity, even though it were bestowed by one whom I so much regard as I do you."

"Have I then nothing to hope from your interference in preventing the marriage

of your sister with my rival"

"You know not how gladly I would serve you if it was in my power," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, "but the fact is, I have heard quite enough from this man to convince me that he is determined upon this union, whatever obstacles may be thrown in his way. Were I to forbid it, as you seem to wish, it would but raise a tempest, in which both of us might be sacrificed to his furious revenge."

"For my own part," sighed the lover. "I care not what becomes of me if I am to lose the treasure upon which my heart is fixed. To see Julia become the unwilling bride of another, would be worse than any death that could be inflicted, even if accompanied by the most agonizing tortures. Nay, if your sister becomes the wife of Henri Mordaunt, I will die by my own hand, and thus rid myself of an

existence that could no longer be endured."

"Have you then no philosophy—no resolution?"

"In any other place I believe I have a tolerable share of both," he replied; "but when once the heart's best affections are engaged, it is not easy to yield up its object. Besides, did not happiness, a short time since, seem to be within my grasp, and can I, when thus suddenly cast down in despair, ever expect a return of those fair prospects which I believed were before me? In truth, Victor, I wish not to live one moment after your sister has given her hand to another."

"So you think now," answered his friend, "but in a short time you will forget this first love, and it is to be hoped, will meet with some other remale, whom you can regard as fondly as you have Julia. You shake your head, but I feel assured

you will by and by confess that I am in the right."

"Impossible."

"So say all disappointed lovers, and yet they generally live long enough to laugh at their notions."

"In other words," exclaimed Charles Delmar, "you can give me no hope of

assisting me against my rival."

"If there was any chance of doing so successfully, I would give my promise without a moment's hesitation," replied his friend. "But the truth is, Henri Mordaunt claimed her as having been previously betrothed, and she must either marry him or enter a convent for the rest of her days. So you see, Charles, the return of this man has created all sorts of difficulties, and I am afraid you must submit to the only course that is open to you."

"What! resign Julia without making an effort to save her from the wretch who seeks her hand, not from any love he bears her, but to deprive me of the happiness which I believed was in store for me? He has, however, shewn him self in his true colours; has driven me to the verge of despair, and now I would have him beware, for, being once roused, he shall find me as vindictive in my hatred

as he is himself."

"Are you then determined to rush upon your destruction?"

"I am determined to pursue any course, however rash it may appear, rather than, suffer that man to triumph over me," exclaimed Charles Delmar.
"Consider my dear friend, how unequal you are to him,"

"In a good cause I am equal to, if not his superior," replied the young man, earnestly. "That he is treacherous, I am well aware; but such persons are generally cowards when they meet with an antagonist who has resolution, and Henri

Mordaunt shall yet find that I have both courage and determination to protect myself and Julia against any designs he may have formed."

"You seem to have forgotten, my good fellow, the alarm which all this will oc-

sion my sister."

"I believe her reliance on me is so strong that she will feel less alarm than you imagine," answered Delmar. "At all events," he added, "anything will be better than to see her sacrificed to a villain."

"Hush!" exclaimed Victor, looking round him with alarm, "be guarded when speaking of him, for some one may repeat your words. and then Heaven only knows

what would be the consequence of your want of caution."

"Were he here," answered the other, "I would repeat the words in his

presence."

"Which would be rash and inconsiderate," exclaimed his friend, "for there is no saying how far his vengeance might carry him, if once he took a mortal hatred

against vou."

"As far as I am myself concerned I care nothing for his hatred since he will find me ever watchful of his actions, even should he make professions of friendship. Nor have you any more reason to fear his threats, for, should he endeavour to abuse the ear of the Dauphin, I will afterwards seek an interview with his royal highness, and in few words explain what sort of man he is in whom he has placed his confidence. I shall have witnesses enough to prove the truth of my assertions and then let Henri Mordaunt be ware, for, from that time he will be no more permitted to carry on his evil designs against you and your sister."

"Were he to suspect as much I would not answer for your life a single

moment."

"You think then he would not hesicate to employ some one to assassinate

"Why," answered the other, "I have no right to assert such a thing as a fact but knowing his vindictive nature I should tremble for your safety if once he thought you meditated the overthrow of his own bad schemes. So think no more of him, my dear Charles; abandon all further hopes of obtaining the hand of my sister, and allow him to marry her, not from any fear of the man, but that he certainly was betrothed, and has consequently a right to claim her even had she been standing with you before the altar, when he so unexpectedly returned."

"It is in vain for you to ask me to yield up my hopes," exclaimed Charles Delmar, "for whilst your sister loves me I will let no opportunity slip to Jeprive him of the prize he has taken from me. And as a commencement of my hostilities I will now proceed to the convent, inform the abbess of what has taken place, and beseech her not to suffer the nuptial rites to be performed unless with Julia's full

consent."

"Aye, that you can do if you please," answered Victor; "but I fear you will not succeed there, for the claim of your rival is such a one as she dare not refuse when he proves the betrothal, and the ceremony must proceed in spite of any obsta-

cles that may be thrown in the way."

Despairing at the little progress he had made Charles Delmar now left his friend and proceeded towards the convent, though with hopes less sanguine than they had been a short time previously. Under any circumstances, however, he was determined to throw every obstacle he could in the way of the marriage, and even contemplated sending a mortal challenge to Henri Mordaunt, preferring rather to risk his life than see the fair treasure he sought, fall into the possession of another. In the midst of these reflections he reached the convent, and was passing beneath its arched entrance, when human voices fell upon his ears, and looking up, he perceived Robert, the servant of his rival, and Father Boneffe, in conversation together. Anxious to avoid being seen, he withdrew into a recess, where he overheard what was passing between the two persons who were standing within a few paces

"This return of your master is most surprising," exclaimed the confessor, in reply to Robert's announcement of that fact, "for we entertained no doubt of his death, and indeed were so certain of it, that masses were offered up for the repose of his soul, and it was reported that his nearest kinsman was daily expected here to

take possession of the property as the legal heir."

"Well, holy father," replied Robert; "he may save himself that trouble at any rate, for Monsieur Mordaunt is as much alive as ever he was, and you may soon have a good proof of it, for he requests you will meet him tonight in the Convent chapel, in order to consecrate his union with Julia St. Pierre."

"Holy Virgin!" exclaimed the priest; "who ever heard of such a marvellous change as this? Why I was to have pronounced the nuptial benediction this very day on the marriage of that young lady with Charles Delmar, whom they tell me

was her first love.

"First or last, it matters very little to us," exclaimed Robert. "My master claims her as his betrothed, and it will be your duty to marry them at the time he has named."

"What hour is that, my son?" "This next coming midnight."

"Indeed!—he is determined then not to lose much time, now that he has

returned home."

"Why, the truth is, holy father," answered Robert, "he has a notion that, if an opportunity was given, she would run off with young Delmar, and marry him when no one was suspecting such a thing. So, to prevent anything of the kind, he intends to make her his wife this very night, and then the hopes of his rival will be for ever at an end."

"Have you spoken to the Lady Abbess yet?"

"No, nor do I intend to do so, for my master thinks the announcement will be made better by you than by anybody else. So you will please to inform her, and if there should be any hesitation about it, you will be kind enough to throw out a hint that she will be likely to incur the censure of her superior, if she throws any obstacles in the way of two persons who have been legally betrothed to each other."

"But why not let the nuptials be performed in the usual manner, and by day?"

"It is not for us to question the motives of my master," exclaimed Robert; "but I suppose the truth is, he thinks there's no time like the present, and as the young lady had made up her mind to be married to-day, she can have no excuse for wishing the ceremony to be put off, though it does so happen that there's a change in the bridegroom."

"Does Monsieur St. Pierre consent to this extraordinary match?" demanded

the confessor.

"I suppose he does," answered Robert; "but whether that's the case or not, matters very little, for ma'amselle having been formally betrothed to him, of course he has a right to insist upon her keeping so solemn a promise."

"But, if she chooses to do so, the young lady has also a right to ask for some

little delay."

"Perhaps so," replied the man; "but I have'nt heard of her having made any such request, so you will be good enough, holy father, not to raise quite so many objections. Monsieur Mordaunt has plenty of money at his command, so as you will receive a handsome present for your services, I think the best thing you can do, will be to make these young folks man and wife without saying another word upon the matter."

"I would know though what Monsieur Delmar says to this alteration in his

"What can the poor fellow say?" demanded Robert, with a laugh. "No doubt he is vexed enough at losing his bride just when they were upon the point of being married; but as there's no help for it, the best thing he can do, is, to forget the lady as soon as he can, and look out for some one else who don't happen to have been promised to anybody previously."

Charles Delmar could scarely control his rage on hearing these words, but as a discovery just then might do him a serious injury, he remained quietly where

he was, and the others proceeded with their conversation.

"I would have it understood, friend," said the confessor, "that it will be absolutely necessary for Monsieur St. Pierre to be present during the ceremony, for as the nearest male relation of the bride, I must be assured that he consents to her marriage with your master. Perhaps you know whether the young lady's brother intends to accompany her?"

"Indeed, holy father, I know nothing about it, my business being to convey to you the orders of my master, without making a parcel of inquiries that would

be considered impertinent."

"At any rate, young man, you are flippant enough."

"Upon my life, father," exclaimed Robert, "I had no intention to give offence, but the truth is I came here on an errand, and gave myself no time to stay and make inquiries about matters that don't concern me. You will, however, see my master by-and-by, and I dare say he will readily answer as many questions as you may please to put to him."

"My son," returned the confessor, "it is the intended bride and her brother

that I must question."

"Then mind my master hears you not," exclaimed Robert, "for he is determined not to be disappointed, let what may happen, so keep a still tongue in your head, or instead of the handsome present he intends to make you may, find yourself compelled to be satisfied with the paltry sum accorded by the strict letter of the law. So let matters take their course—join the hands of the bride and bridegroom, make them one, and you will have performed a very important service."

"In what respect?"

"Why you will prevent Monsieur Mordaunt being annoyed by a rival who has had the presumption to seek the lady's affection. Aye, and as you know, holy father, they would have been married before this time, if my master had not arrived

here in the very nick of time."

"But I have been told that nothing was heard of him for more than two

years."

"You have heard quite right, then," answered Robert, "and its not to be wondered at either, that nothing was heard of him, for nearly all that time he was a prisoner among a parcel of wild Arabs, and it was at length only by a mere chance that he contrived to make his escape. Egad! if he had only been one day later, only think what the consequences would have been."

"He would have found mademoiselle married to another, and there would been

an end of it."

"Would there have been an end of it, though!" exclaimed the domestic; "and yet you are right in one respect too, for there would have been an end of Monsieur Delmar as sure as fate."

"By what means?"

"By my master's means, to be sure," answered Robert. "The newly married husband would have been shot, or run through the body in a duel—the bride would have been made a widow, and my master would have married her by way of consoling her for the loss of her first husband."

"My son, you speak of these things too lightly!"

"I am only speaking of what would have happened if Monsieur Mordaunt had been a day after the fair," replied the other. "Things, however, turned out luckily after all, and the young lady may think herself well off in having got a husband whose love has lasted out the two years of his captivity."

"The truth of it is, I suppose," returned the confessor, laughing, "your mas-

ter had no great fancy for an Arab wife."

"I don't know how that may have been," exclaimed Robert, "but at any rate ma'amselle ought to be flattered at the eagerness with which he claimed her hand the very moment he returned to his own country. As for Monsieur Delmar, I don't think he has much to complain of, seeing that he had no right to be courting

a girl whom he knew was betrothed to another. However, holy father, you will see the abbess of this convent if you please, and desire her to have the chapel ready for the marriage at midnight."

"I will do so," replied Father Boneffe, "and be it your duty in the meantime, to see Monsieur St. Pierre, and tell him that I cannot perform the ceremony unless he is present to give his consent."

"But suppose Monsieur St. Pierre don't choose to be present at the ceremony!"

"Why then I should have good reason to believe that the marriage was without

his consent."

"What of that, your reverence?" demanded Robert. "Does it matter to you if a handsome sum of money is given to reward your services for an affair of this

"Aye, my friend, that makes a vast deal of difference, as you say," exclaimed the monk. "I believe Monsieur Mordaunt is very generous to us sons of the church, so you may either bring Victor St. Pierre with you or not."

"Then I am to understand that there will be no difficulty in the way of the

ceremony?"

"Certainly not."

"But suppose the young lady should remonstrate against the marriage?"

"In that case I should console myself with the reflection that young ladies are not the best judges in affairs that their own future well doing in the world depend on. In one word, my son, I will perform the service that is to unite them, whether she approves of it or not."

"Then you may depend upon receiving for it a present in money that will be

worth your acceptance."

"Aye, aye, tell your master that as the affair may get me into trouble if any stir is made about it, he must not forget to reward me for it accordingly. I will be at my post at the hour he has appointed, and this night shall make him the husband of the young lady who would have jilted him."

"And you will take care, holy father, to represent the case in such a way to the lady abbess that she will not raise any objections when the important moment

"Depend upon it, my good fellow, there shall be nothing to mar the nuptials, since I hear Monsieur Mordaunt is likely to act with generosity in return for the favour he has demanded from me. I will immediately prepare all things for the

ceremony, so that when he arrives with the bride there will be no delay.

"You will desire the porter to open the gates as soon as they arrive," observed the other; "for to tell you the truth, there is a notion that Monsieur Delmar will try to gain admittance to the chapel, and if he should succeed in entering the convent wall with the bridal party, there's no knowing what mischief may come of it."

"He will be disappointed if he expects to interrupt the ceremony," answered the monk, "for I will give strict injunctions to the man who has the care of the gates not to let anybody in except those who have to take part in the ceremony. So the young gentleman must make up his mind to be disappointed, and to-morrow morning he will have the mortification of hearing that his lady love has been bound to his rival as fast as our holy church can rivet the fetters of matrimony."

"I will go and tell my master then that he needn't be afraid any longer of losing

his destined bride."

Then whispering a few more words to the monk, he took leave of him, and when both had disappeared, Charles Delmar stole forth from his place of concealment, and wandered towards the adjacent forest, to consider what plans he had better adopt under existing circumstances. In the end, however, he resolved to scale the walls of the convent as soon as it was dark enough for his purpose.

### CHAPTER IV.

THE CEREMONIES FOR THE APPROACHING NUPTIALS PROCEED.—THE RITES COMMENCE.—THE UNEXPECTED INTERRUPTION.—MORDAUNT'S RAGE AND FINAL DETERMINATION.

Ir was without much difficulty that Charles Delmar scaled the walls of the convent, and when once within the sacred edifice he kept close within the shadow till an opportunity presented itself to make his way unseen to the chapel. This he at length succeeding in doing, and finding the door opened he entered, and to avoid discovery concealed himself behind a large gothic monument. From this place, being near the altar, he could see and hear all that might be said or done, and crouching within a canopied recess he awaited in trembling anxiety the moment that was to prove whether Julia was to become the bride of his rival.

For three long dreary hours did he remain there, unable to leave his place of concealment for fear of being seen by any of the domestics belonging to the convent, who occasionally made their appearance in the chapel to complete the bridal arrangements that were going on. At length the chapel bell sounded the appointed hour, and scarcely had this ceased than he saw approaching the procession of friars, nuns, &c., chanting a hymn appropriate to the occasion; then came the bride, pale and agitated, supported on either side by her brother and Monsieur Mordaunt, the latter of whom seemed to be endeavouring to prevail upon her to conceal the emotion with which she was oppressed. Julia, however, regarded him not, and no sooner had the chief actors in this scene taken their places before the altar, than addressing herself to the person who had forced her to this terrible alternative, she said in a voice trembling with emotion—

"Monsieur Mordaunt, I have been brought here against all my remonstrances, and in spite of the prayers and entreaties with which I have endeavoured to turn you from your purpose. But even now it is not too late to perform that act of justice which I have demanded; and here, in the presence of my brother and this priest I solemnly declare that it is nothing but force that compels me to pro-

nounce vows which my soul shrinks from with horror."

"I will hear nothing that you have to say upon that subject," answered Mordaunt, "for you well know the purpose for which we are assembled here, and no entreaties will prevail upon me to yield up a point upon which my heart is resolved. I claim you, Julia St. Pierre as my bride, and, once for all, remind you of the sacred promise given me ere I left this county, three years ago."

"That promise," she replied, it is no longer in my power to fulfil. You know the reason of my refusal, yet have the baseness to insist upon my per-

juring myself to another."

"You had no right to pledge yourself to my rival till the rumours of my death had been confirmed. Nay, here is the holy priest waiting to perform the ceremony, and I appeal to him to say whether I am not justified in insisting upon the fulfilment of the promise you made me."

"If I am appealed to," answered Father Boneffe, "I must needs confess you have the right you claim. However, not being a witness of what took place, I must leave it to the young lady's brother to say whether she is bound by any pledge given previously to your departure from this country."

"Monsieur St. Pierre is present to answer for himself," exclaimed the bride-

groom, glancing round triumphantly upon the spectators of the scene.

"That such a promise was given," answered Victor, "cannot be denied, but owing to your long absence, and rumours that were spread abroad of your death, she has since accepted the offer made by Monsieur Delmar, who insists upon it that his claims are as strong as your own."

"But," exclaimed Mordaunt, "he knows better than to urge his claim in any other place than this. I have spoken to him upon the subject, and then was the time for him to bring this affair to such an issue that there should afterwards be no further dispute about it."

"He certainly abstained from doing so," answered St. Pierre, "but it was

only at my earnest request."

"He knew better to enforce his claims when justice was altogether upon my side," retorted the other. "However, we are not here to argue that matter now; I have approached this altar with your sister to receive from the priest his benediction on our nuptials, and if any obstacle is thrown in my way, you know what means I shall take to punish those who have disappointed me in my fondest hopes."

"Monsieur Henri Mordaunt," cried Julia, "I ask you solemnly, in this holy place, if it is not rather out of revenge than through any love that you now insist upon the celebration of a union that you know is most abhorrent to my own

heart?"

"That is a question that I am not bound to answer," he replied; "and, as none other will be given, I demand that the ceremony be proceeded with, without further delay."

"Have you, then, no pity for the unfortunate girl whom you profess to love?"

asked St. Pierre.

"I have as much pity," returned the other, as she had when she broke her vow to me, and promised to bestow her hand upon my hated rival."

"And you expect me," exclaimed Victor, "to give my assent, when I see the

misery she is now suffering."

"You will do as you please, about that," retorted the other, haughtily; "but remember, I am not to be trifled with, with impunity, and any act of deception on your part will be punished in the way I have given you fair warning of."

"In other words, you will use whatever influence you possess to ruin

me "

"Aye, if I find myself deceived."

"There can be no deception," answered Victor St. Pierre, "when I told you from the beginning that I would throw no obstacle in the way of your marriage with my sister, provided she raised none herself. You have now heard how entirely she is opposed to this union, and as her brother and only protector, it is my duty to save her from the misery that must ever follow an ill-assorted marriage."

"How is it," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "that I have incurred her dislike, when just previous to my going abroad, she expressed no unwillingness to betroth

herself to me?"

"Have you really forgotten," asked Julia, "how strongly I remonstrated against making that promise, when my heart, as you well know, was promised to another."

"I know there was some little opposition raised," he replied, "but that was soon overcome, and you remember as well as I do, that in the end, you yielded to my entreaties. The pledge was given, Julia, and by that, I now insist that no further hindrance is offered to the solemn proceedings, we are assembled to celebrate."

"My son," exclaimed the monk, who was presiding at the altar, "this is no place, nor is the occasion fitting for a dispute; that should have been arranged ere you came here. In a word, had you not better postpone this solemnity, till you have had further time to speak to the young lady upon the subject?"

"I will not postpone it for an hour, so proceed with your duty, father, or I shall afterwards lay your meddling conduct before those who will not fail

to punish you for refusing to join those who have been betrothed."

"I have not refused," answered Father Boneffe, "but have merely tried to

convince you that it is your duty to yield a little to the request of her who has been brought here so unwillingly this night."

"Your advice is not required," he replied, "nor is it my intention to follow

"Then I," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, "in pity to my sister, forbid any further proceedings, till I have had time to consult with, and advise her upon this subject."

"Are you prepared to take the consequences of your madness?"



"For myself," replied Victor, "I care not what vengeance you may resolve on but in behalf of my sister, I solemnly protest against the ceremony being proceeded with, till one week has been granted to all parties, to consider an affair of so much importance."

"I will not consent even to an hour," and then turning towards the priest who had been engaged in a whispered conversation with Robert, his unprincipled dependent, he added :-- "Father Bonesse, you know your duty, and I now, for the last time, ask if it is your intention any longer to postpone a duty which you are

bound to perform? Answer quickly, for if you hesitate, I will obtain the assistance of some other priest, who will be less fastidious when called upon to

The monk, who had been promised a very large sum of money by Robert, on condition that he proceeded without further delay, seemed to hesitate for a moment, and then opening the book which he held in his hand, said, in an apparently reluctant tone,—

"My son, you have reminded me of my duty, and I am now ready to proceed. The young lady will not, of course, by any obstinate refusal, create confusion and

alarm in a place dedicated to the service of our holy religion?"

"Let those who brought me here against my will, answer for it," she replied, firmly. "For my own part, I shall consider myself blameless, whatever may be the result of a transaction in which my consent has not been asked."

"It was unnecessary," exclaimed the pliant monk, "seeing that your consent was given at the moment when you betrothed yourself to Monsieur Mordaunt."

"But I promised not that the ceremony should be performed on the very day of

his return home."

"You consented though, that there should be no unnecessary delay," replied Mordaunt, "and yet your brother has now the conscience to ask for a week. And well I know, that in the interim, supposing the demand should be assented to, he would connive at the marriage taking place between yourself and the man who has been base enough to take advantage of my absence, to rob me of the love which I prize more dearly than aught else that the world contains."

"Were we in any other place than this," exclaimed Victor St Pierre. "I would

tell you you lied."

"Gentlemen!" cried the monk, "forbear, I implore, and do not defectate this church with a quarrel that may lead to strife and bloodshed. Mensieur St. Pierre, you have acted as one who is utterly forgetful of you duty, and I therefore now declare that, unless you have a better reason to advance for any delay, I shall now proceed to perform the solemn rites for which this assembly has been called together."

With this, Mordaunt took the hand of Julia, and forced her, reluctant as she was, to the altar; her brother followed them mechanically, and the priest had pronounced the first few words of the ceremony when a voice close by, hourse, but distinct,

was heard to exclaim,-

"Julia St. Pierre, remember your vow!"

The monk paused, and all looked round with amazement, but no one was to be seen near, who could be suspected of having uttered the solemn adjuration. Mordaunt appeared at first confounded by some unexpected interruption, but quickly recovering his usual determination, he muttered, between his clenched teeth,—

"There is some jugglery in this, but it shall not prevail. If father, be not alarmed by the warning of a concealed enemy, but proceed with your duty. The foe we have to encounter knows the weakness of his cause, or he would have come boldly forward, instead of uttering his warning from some hidden recess

in this sacred edifice. Once more I say go on, and fear not."

Urged by these words the priest again commenced the usual service, and again, though in a louder voice, the same voice rang echoing through the chapel. The utmost consternation was now visible, all shrunk back with alarm, and as they did so, Charles Delmar strode forth like some spectre from the grave, and advanced towards the spot where the bridal party had congregated.

"Who and what are you?" demanded Father Boneffe, as soon as he could suffi-

ciently recover himself.

"Who I am, you will know," answered the other.

"What is your business here?"

"To forbid a marriage that it would be impious to proceed further with."
"How!" exclaimed the priest, angrily, "are not these two persons betrothed to each other?"

"They were," replied Charles Delmar, "but the long absence of the intended bridegroom afforded sufficient reason to believe that he was no longer of this world. Then, and not till then, Julia St. Pierre gave her solemn pledge, that no one but myself should possess her hand. This very day, nay since the unexpected return of my rival, she has renewed her promise to me, and I am now here to bid her remember the vow which forbids her to become the bride of another."

"I do-I do remember it," murmured Julia, throwing herself into his arms,

and sobbing convulsively.

"Monsieur St. Pierre," exclaimed Mordaunt, addressing himself to the brother of the young lady, "you see that I am no longer loved, that my own constancy

and affection are at last to be rewarded only with loathing and contempt."

"You mistake my sister," answered the young man, "for though she gives the preference to your rival, I feel assured that she regards you still as a friend. Be advised therefore, by one who is totally disinterested in the affair, and yield her up rather than give rise to any feeling of animosity that may never be extinguished."

"Yield her up to one whom I so utterly despise!" exclaimed Mordaunt, wrathfully. "Think you then I have no spirit, that I am to be persuaded to

confess myself defeated upon a point that is still under my own control?"

"You speak of despising me," said Charles Delmar, "and that I can endure with perfect indifference, because I return the feeling to the fullest extent. But this lady, sir, is not to be the victim of your base schemes, and as she has declared herself in my favour, I will protect her from your violence, whatever may be the consequence to myself."

"You will have to answer for it in a way you little expect;" retorted the other,

angrily.

"I can expect nothing but evil from you," he replied, "and therefore shall

not be taken off my guard."

"Again, gentlemen, I must insist upon your respecting the place in which we are assembled," exclaimed the priest. "You," addressing himself to Delmar, "have clearly no right to present yourself here at such a moment, and I therefore desire your immediate departure, in order that the ceremony may proceed without further interruption."

"No, no, no! in mercy do not leave me!" cried Julia, still clinging to her

lover.

"But I insist upon it." exclaimed Father Boneffe, "and if he refuses to obey,

it will be at his own peril."

"Let the peril be what it may I shall not shrink from it in such a cause," replied the young man. "I am here to protect an innocent and hapless female, from those who would destroy her every hope of happiness, and if need be, will die in attempting her resue."

"You seem to forget," answered the priest, "that her brother is here to see

that no violence is offered."

"Her brother," exclaimed Charles Delmar, "is my friend, and to do him justice, I believe he is most anxious to rescue her from this hated marriage. Unfortunately, however, he conceives himself to be in the power of Monsieur Mordaunt, und therefore yields through a dread of being ruined by the evil machinations of a foe."

"That," returned the priest, "is a matter which I know nothing about; "but this I am well assured of—if there is any just ground of complaint against Monsieur Mordaunt there are means of obtaining redress without disturbing the

ceremony in which we were engaged."

"Aye," exclaimed Delmar, "when the mischief can no longer be repaired; he loves her not, yet would make her his wife, in order that, at no very distant period, he may have it in his power to show his contempt by banishing her from his house for ever."

"Indeed!" muttered Mordaunt, "and how pray did you happen to obtain

this piece of intelligence?"

"Not from any of your triends or followers," answered Charles Delmar, "but because I know your heart, and the bad feelings by which it is impelled. You have lived to see another preferred to yourself; yet, from no other motive than that of a diabolical revenge, would force her to a union that she regards with horror."

"At any other time, or in any other place, I should resent this language," exclaimed Mordaunt, "but now you may rave on with impunity, for, knowing the advantages of my own position, I can bear with your insults with perfect com-

posure."

"It may be so," answered his rival; but being here I will complete the task for

which I came."

"In other words, you think to prevent my marriage with Julia St. Pierre?"
"Precisely so," he replied; "at least it is my intention to do so, unless she is prepared to renounce the vow that her lips pronounced but a few hours since."

"And pray, young man, what was the vow she made?"

"To die, rather than prove false to me."

"False to you!" exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, in a tone of contempt; "and why should she not be as ready to break that vow as the one she made to me on the day when we were betrothed to each other? Besides, she knows well what must be the fate of her brother, if I am once driven to extremities, and for his sake she must fulfil the engagement she has entered into with me."

"For him she has nothing to fear," exclaimed Charles Delmar, "for whatever evil you may try to work against him I will oppose by such means as you shall not be aware of. I know your intentions, Monsieur Mordaunt, and will foil them, whatever may be the consequences that I bring upon

myself."

"Is this controversy to have no end?" demanded Father Boneffe, perceiving the effect of these latter words upon the person to whom they were addressed. "We are assembled here for the performance of a sacred duty, and it must either be conducted with becoming decorum, or I shall order means to be taken for imme-

diately excluding the intruder from the chapel."

"Hear me, father," interposed Julia, throwing herself upon her knees before the monk, "and do not hastily perform those rites against which I solemnly protest. I have asked for time to consider the matter, and neither threats nor violence shall force me to give my hand away in marriage till that request has been complied with."

"You hear her," said the priest, to Monsieur Mordaunt, "and it only remains

for you to say whether you will accede to her terms."

"A week has been demanded," exclaimed the other, "and that is so monstrous a delay that I at once refuse to accede to the terms."

"Are you prepared to afford any time for deliberation?"

"Why, to confess the truth," returned Monsieur Mordaunt, "I am not willing to make any concession, but, to prove that I am not unreasonable, I will, upon certain conditions, consent to a postponement of our nuptials, till twelve o'clock to-morrow. If she agrees to my terms, all further proceedings are for the present suspended."

"What are the terms you propose?" asked the priest.

"That she remains here under the care of the Lady Abbess," he replied. "On no account must she be suffered to leave the convent, as I have reason to suspect Monsieur Delmar would not hesitate to take advantage of my concession by pre-

vailing upon her to elope with him."

"There is nothing unreasonable in your proposition, my son," answered the monk, "and I therefore venture to suggest to Monsieur Delmar and the young lady's brother, that their best course will be to agree to the suggestion. What say you, gentlemen;—shall these proceedings be terminated on the terms that have been proposed?"

"I have no objection to offer," replied Monsieur St. Pierre, "though it must needs be confessed I would rather my sister had returned home with me."

"Surely," exclaimed the priest, "you do not think she can be in danger while under the care of our good Lady Abbess? But you cannot;—so now tell me, Monsieur Delmar, if you have any objection to raise against the proposition of your

rival."

"I might have the same as has been expressed by the brother of the young lady," he replied, "but, as I believe it would be useless to express it, I shall at once yield to the terms. The time granted is short, but I am not without a hope that upon reflection Monsieur Mordaunt will relent, and release from her promise the hapless girl whom he has almost driven to despair."

"Why do you venture to hope that?" asked his rival.

"Because," replied Delmar, "few persons are so destitute of feeling that they can entail misery upon a woman when they have the power to prevent it. That Monsieur Mordaunt has no great affection for Julia, I am confident, and he will, therefore, do well to release her from the promise which she made on the day of their betrothal."

"To-morrow, at twelve o'clock," answered Mordaunt, "you will find me still resolved to complete the nuptials which, for to-night, I have consented shall be broken off. Julia, however, must remain here under the guardianship of the Lady Abbess, whom I shall hold responsible for her safe keeping."

"And what," demanded Monsieur St. Pierre, "will be the consequences if my

sister refuses?"

"In that case," answered Mordaunt, "she must immediately take the veil in this convent; for having broken her solemn pledge to me, she must not be permitted to give her hand in marriage to any other person."

"You profess to love my sister."

"I do love her," returned the other. "In captivity I felt myself supported by the hope that an opportunity would some day present itself for my escape, and that if it should be my good fortune to return to France, I should find Julia still faithful to the vows she uttered previous to my departure. How much I have been disappointed in that hope, Monsieur St. Pierre, you have yourself been a witness. She has forgotten me in my absence, and I found her on the very eve of bestowing her hand upon another."

"That was because she supposed you were dead."

"Granting even that," continued Monsieur Mordaunt, "I had no right to expect that she would refuse to perform her solemn contract when I appeared to

make my claim."

"You do not seem to make any allowance for the very awkward predicament in which she finds herself," replied Victor. "Besides, her attachment to Monsieur Delmar is of long standing. She loved him even before her promise was extorted to become your bride; and it is, therefore, hardly to be wondered at if she now shows some reluctance to dismiss him merely for the purpose of becoming your wife."

"Yet she must do so," exclaimed Mordaunt, "or you know what the consequence will be; so I advise you to prevail upon her to become my bride to-

morrow."

"I do know the consequences," answered the other, "and am prepared to encounter them, rather than by any authority that I may possess over my sister to render the remainder of her days unhappy."

"You think, then, she will be more happy as a nun in this convent than as my

wife?"
"That is a question that I, of course, am not able to answer," he replied; "but judging from what has just taken place, I have every reason to believe she is willing to make any sacrifice rather than give her hand to him who possesses not her heart."

"Methinks her obstinacy argues but little love for her brother," observed Mor-

daunt, with a sneer.

"I am well satisfied with her kindly feelings towards me," returned Victor; "and am quite willing to endure the consequences of the step she is about to adopt."

"The utter ruin of your own prospects, then, has no weight with you in this

instance ?"

"Not the slightest. You have boasted your power over me, and I now dare

you to the worst."

"Well," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, after a pause, "I shall not act rashly, though your wilful obstinacy might well excuse any step that I might take. To morrow, at the hour of twelve, Julia must give her decisive answer; and if it should be against me, it will be for me to adopt such a course as I have before spoken of."

"To-morrow," replied Victor St. Pierre, "you will find my sister still resolved to refuse your hand. I know she is not to be moved by your threats; and as far as I am myself concerned, I will not interfere in an affair of which she must be the

best judge."

"Act as you please in the matter," exclaimed Mordaunt, "and afterwards blame yourself for whatever your own blind heedlessness may force me to do. There is still sufficient time left you for reflection, and you will do well to avoid my anger."

He spoke these words in a tone of determination, and then turning away

abruptly, took his departure.

#### CHAPTER V.

▲ WOMAN'S RESOLUTION.—THE REJECTED LOVER.—THE UNLOOKED-FOR TERMI\*

NATION.

After a night of restless anxiety, passed in the cell to which she had been consigned, Julia St. Pierre rose in the morning with her determination still unmoved. For her brother's sake she might have yielded, but she knew the pure friendship of Monsieur Delmar, and relying upon the promise he had made, she felt assured that he would exert himself to the utmost to avert the mischief that had been threatened by the man whose unlooked for presence had turned all her anticipated happiness to grief and despair. Then falling upon her knees, she besought the aid of Heaven in the hour of need; and feeling somewhat more firmness, opened a book of devotion, which had been left on the table, and soon lost all worldly thoughts in the occupation that then employed her mind.

She was still thus engaged, when one of the lay-sisters entered with breakfast, which having been sparingly partaken of, she, at the suggestion of the female, accompanied her to the convent parlour, where she was informed the Lady Abbess was waiting to see her. On entering the room, the lay-sister was requested to retire; and the Abbess La Ramee having desired her visitor to be seated opposite to her, asked if she was still determined to oppose the designs of the man to whom

she had been betrothed.

"I have seen no reason to alter my determination," she replied; "and I, therefore, implore you, holy mother, to assist me against one who has asserted an

authority over me that he has no right to claim."

"Daughter," answered La Ramee, "I pity you from the very bottom of my heart, but however much I may wish to do so, I have not the power to aid you in this affair. You have been solemnly betrothed to Monsieur Mordaunt, and by the

laws of our church he has a right to adopt the course that has filled you with so much affliction."

"And I," answered Julia, "have also a right to refuse my hand, when, by his long absence, we had every reason to believe that my promise had been cancelled by his death."

"That plea, my child, will not avail you," exclaimed the abbess, "for as he has returned before your nuptials with his rival had taken place, he has still a right to insist upon the fulfilment of your pledge to him."

"But I have one alternative that will yet thwart him."

"True; you may take the veil, but remember, by doing so you seclude yourself for ever from the world."

"Alas!" sighed Julia, "the world has lost all its attractions for me, now that

I am become the victim of misfortune."

"Perhaps the misfortune is not so great as you imagine," replied the abbess; "for it seems to me that Monsieur Mordaunt must entertain a great regard for

you, or he would not be so resolute in enforcing his demand."

"Monsieur Mordaunt never loved me," answered Julia; "he has throughout been actuated solely by a feeling of revenge against his rival, and it is only to wound him in the tenderest part that he has sought to deprive him of my hand. This I have known from the beginning, and you may therefore judge whether it is possible that I can ever have regarded him with any other feeling than that of dislike."

"How comes it about that you suffered yourself to utter the vows of be-

trothal?"

"It would be too long a story for me to enter into just now," answered Julia, "but in a word, I will confess that I was urged to do so by the threats of Monsieur Mordaunt, that in the event of my refusal he would take steps to procure the utter ruin of my brother."

"Which he can do as well now as he could then."

"Happily, I have discovered that he cannot," exclaimed Julia, "for I have the solemn promise of Monsieur Delmar that he will counteract the evil plottings of this revengeful man, and am, therefore, the more resolved to take the veil rather than become the wife of Monsieur Mordaunt."

"But in that case," answered La Ramee, "the lover whom you would have

favoured will still be doomed to disappointment."

"Alas! there is no help for it," returned Julia, "and the only hope that remains for me, is that he will be resigned to a destiny that cannot be averted."

"Then in the same way," exclaimed the abbess, "he ought to submit without a murmur, if, in such an extremity as this you give your hand to his rival."

"That I will never do whilst an alternative remains to me," cried Julia resolutely. "I never led Monsieur Mordaunt to suppose that he possessed my affections, and since he is still determined to persecute me, I shall seek an asylum from him within these consecrated walls. Here, at least, I shall be safe, and my determination being once formed, neither his persuasions nor his threats will turn me from it."

"Still, my daughter," answered the other, "you keep out of sight the fact that by adopting this course you will raise up an implacable enemy against your

brother."

"I know the wickedness Monsieur Mordaunt is capable of," she replied, "but I also feel assured that my brother is not so much in his power as he would fain persuade himself. The Dauphin, to whom he intends to apply, will not commit an act of injustice, and in that hope I confidently rely that the machinations of my persecutor will fail."

"You are resolved, I see, my dear girl," said the abbess, "but I would still counsel you to give this matter your most careful consideration. Reflect ere

it is too late, and embrace the chance of happiness there is before you."

"Happiness!" exclaimed Julia; "Do you think then, holy mother, that I could be happy with one who has done so much to disturb the peace I once enjoyed?

He only seeks to make me his wife, that he may thus inflict a wound in the heart of his rival, and with the knowledge of that fact, I can never regard him with any other feeling than that of scorn. To you, therefore, I now only look in this hour of tribulation, for through your interference alone, can I hope that Monsieur Mordaunt may be prevailed upon to relinquish his claim."

"I have no influence whatever over him, my child."
"Have you then spoken to him upon the subject?"

"I have," answered the abbess; "Monsieur Mordaunt was here at an early hour this morning, and during our interview I spoke to him of the cruelty of his insisting on his demand, when he must needs see that you love him not."

"And he was deaf to what you said?"

"So much so, that I could effect no change in the determination of urging his claim when the hour arrives. He insists that you shall either become his bride, or

take the veil ere this day has been brought to a close."

At this period, the lay-sister entered the room to announce that Monsieur St. Pierre was at the gate, and requested an interview with Julia, before the moment of her trial arrived. The abbess desired that he might be admitted, and shortly afterwards he presented himself before them.

"Pardon me, holy abbess," he said "for coming before the hour appointed, but anxiety for my sister would suffer me to delay no longer. She has now thrown herself under your protection, and to you do I look for a friend, against the man

who has occasioned her all this affliction."

"Such aid as I have the power to bestow shall be willingly given," replied the abbess. "I pity the sufferings of your sister, and will do aii I can to mitigate them, but as it cannot be denied, that she has been betrothed to Monsieur Mordaunt, I can do no more than receive her as a nun into my convent, if she persists in not fulfilling her contract."

"It is an alternative that I would have avoided," answered St. Pierre, "but, since nothing else remains to be done, I would rather see her immured here for the remainder of her days, than consent, against her own will, to see her become

the wife of a man who loves her not."

"In this place, my dear brother," exclaimed Julia, "I can find that happiness which is denied me in the world, Mordaunt cannot follow me within these walls, and in that thought I receive a satisfaction greater than I can express. For you, however, I still entertain much fear, since he may seek to revenge himself on the brother, for the coldness and contempt which he has received from the sister."

"Fear nothing on my account, dear Julia, "answered the young man, "for I know the excess he is capable of, and shall be prepared to avert any plot he may

form against me."

"But he will try to ruin you with the Dauphin," exclaimed his sister, "and should he succeed in his project I shall ever have to reproach myself with being the

cause of your misfortune."

"Reproach not yourself with that," answered Victor, "for the ruin he seeks to bring about will not be so easily effected as he imagines. The Dauphin of France will not decide upon his charges till he has heard both sides of the question, and when he has learnt from me the motives that have led to the hostilty of Monsieur Mordaunt, he will refuse to lend himself to the evil designs that have been plotted against me."

"Such a hope I have myself ventured to indulge in," exclaimed Julia, "but we know Mordaunt to be an unprincipled villain, and I fear the failure of one plot will only serve to make him the more resolute in trying another. In a word, I tremble lest he may not make some secret attempt against your

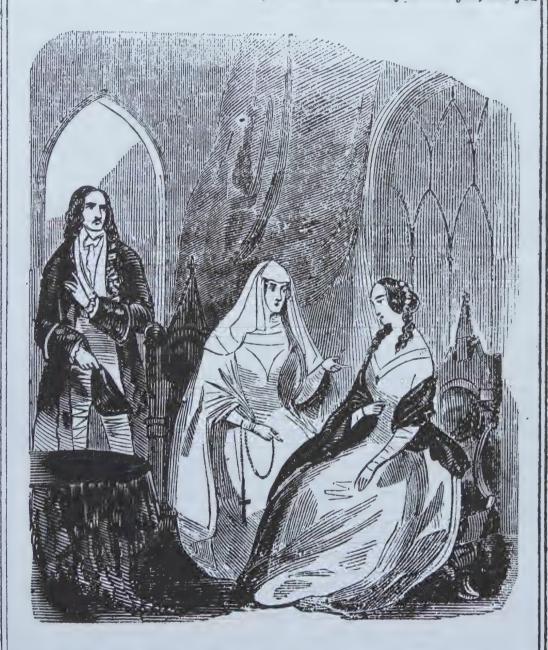
ife."

"Against a secret attempt I shall endeavour to be prepared," answered Victor St. Pierre; "and should he challenge me to a fair and open duel, I have as much skill as himself in the use of all kinds of weapons, so that the chances will be as much in my favour as in his."

"Still," she replied, "you may judge of the constant uneasiness I shall

feel lest any serious misfortune should occur through the course I have adopted in this affair."

"In truth, my dear Julia," exclaimed her brother, "I believe the danger exists only in your imagination; Monsieur Mordaunt has never been remarkable for courage, and, I feel assured, in my own mind, that he will not be anxious to provoke a breach of the peace, when he knows that I shall be ever ready to defend myself. Besides, I shall be permitted occasionally to visit you, and you



will then hear from my own lips how matters are going on between Mordaunt and myself."

"Your visits," interposed the abbess, "shall be as often as our rules admit; but they can only be allowed occasionally, except under peculiar circumstances. You can, however, leave messages as often as you please with the porter at the gate, and they will be immediately conveyed to your sister."

"Am I to understand, then," demanded Victor, "that if she refuses to be

"Am I to understand, then," demanded Victor, "that if she refuses to be the bride of Monsieur Mordaunt, she must of necessity become the inmate of a

convent?"

"Such is the law," answered La Ramee, "and under no circumstances ean it be departed from. I have been speaking to your sister upon the subject, and would fain have prevailed on her to consent to this marriage, rather than, at her time of life, immure herself, for the remainder of her days, from the world."

"And she would not listen to your advice?" "No; she is still resolved to take the veil."

"The alternative is a sad one," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, "and yet I admire her courage, since anything is preferable to an ill-assorted marriage like

Whilst he was speaking the chapel bell tolled twelve, and scarcely had the sound ceased than the door of the room was opened, and Monsieur Mordaunt

strode in.

"I have come before you, holy mother," he exclaimed, "without the formality of an announcement, but my visit was expected, and you will, therefore, be pleased to pardon my impatience. I see, too, that you have had a conference with Julia St. Pierre, who, I suppose by this time has consented that our nuptials shall take place?"

"The young lady," replied the abbess, "can best answer you that ques-

tion."

"Then to you I appeal," he said, turning towards Julia. "You have heard my question, and the appointed hour having arrived, I would know what decision you have come to."

"You know it already," she replied.

"In other and plainer words, you are still determined to reject the man you are betrothed to?"

"Such is my sister's unalterable resolution," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, in-

"Unalterable!" cried the other, haughtily; "is she then so unmindful of a solemn promise that she can thus break it without cause having been given ?"

"The truth is," answered St. Pierre, "the promise you speak of was reluctantly pronounced, and you cannot, therefore, be surprised at her having engaged herself to another when there was sufficient reason for believing that you had been

lost in the vessel which went down at sea."

"Aye," exclaimed the other, bitterly, "and no doubt she was glad enough of the chance that presented itself for encouraging the addresses of any more favoured rival. But I am not to be defeated as easily as she imagines, for I have arrived in time to claim my promised bride, and this day either sees us united by the priest, or she becomes for evermore an inmate of these dreary walls."

"I am prepared for the alternative," she replied, "and will take the vows when-

ever the abbess is ready to preside at the ceremony."

"Foolish girl," muttered Mordaunt, "you will bitterly repent the step ere you have been a month in this place."

"I shall scarcely repent it," she replied, "when I reflect that the course was

adopted to save myself from a fate that I looked forward to with horror."

'Indeed! and in what manner have I been so unfortunate as to incur this dis-

"Surely," she exclaimed, "you cannot require an explanation of that which must be so well known to yourself. You are aware that, though a promise was extorted from me, I never regarded you with any feeling than that of dislike, yet have I been followed and persecuted till a reluctant consent was wrung from

"Which rement you would withdraw even at the moment when I claim its tulniment. However, you know the consequences of your folly, and I am in no humour to save you from becoming a nun, though I could do so, were I disposed to release you from your promise,'

"Then now I indeed see," exclaimed Victor, "that you never felt any real love

for my sister."

"If the truth must be told, I never did," answered the other, "but I had a feeling of revenge to gratify, and will not be disappointed, since it is in my power to render unhappy those who have hitherto defied me. Julia has scorned my proffered love, and I revenge myself by insisting upon her choosing an alternative that will prevent her ever becoming the bride of my rival."

"And you can exult in the misery of one whom you pretended to love."

"As for that," replied Monsieur Mordaunt, "revenge is so precious to me that I would not forego this for pleasure any offer that could be made to me. I have been disappointed even at the moment when I believed myself most safe, and there is at least some satisfaction in knowing it is through me your sister will be henceforth shut from the world, which a short time since promised her so much happiness. Nor does my triumph end there, for I shall witness the despair of the man who, taking advantage of my absence, has supplanted me in the affections of her who was destined to be my bride."

"Monsieur Mordaunt," exclaimed the abbess severely, "if you are here only to exult over those whose misery you have caused, I must request you to

retire."

"I will do so," he replied, "when I have witnessed the ceremony that consigns Julia St. Pierre for ever to this place. I have a right to know that you have performed your duty, and shall not take my departure till I have heard her pronounce those oaths that bind her to pass the remainder of her days within the dreary walls of a nunnery."

"The place," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, "is not so gloomy or melancholy. but she prefers it to becoming the victim of a man whose love she never possessed. Here at least, she may live in quiet and repose, supported by the reflec-

tion that she has avoided a far greater evil."

"Upon my word," retorted the other, "any one would imagine that I sought the young lady's hand for no other purpose than to render her life miserable."

"I know your design," answered St. Pierre, "and though the sacrifice my sister makes is to be regretted, there is yet some consolation in the reflection that she thereby escapes a destiny still more to be avoided. At all events, your malice has been foiled, and she will not be subjected to the cruelty and neglect with which you would have treated her, had the celebration of the nuptial rites taken place.'

"Who," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "besides yourself, dares assert that my

intentions towards Julia St. Pierre were anything but honourable?"

"Monsieur Mordaunt," again exclaimed the abbess, "I have once more to command that you disturb not the quiet of this sanctuary by these unseemly broils. You are here to receive the final decision of Julia St. Pierre; she has rejected your proposition, and having a right to do so, you are bound to yield to her determination."

"And you, madam," he replied, "are bound to lose no time in performing the ceremony that makes her for ever a resident beneath this roof. Let that be ac-

complished and I quit this place never to return to it."

"Do not believe, Monsieur Mordaunt," said Julia, "that I am unwilling to take the vows that you so strongly insist on. I am prepared to accompany the Lady Abbess to the chapel whenever she is ready."

"You hear her," exclaimed the other, "she expresses her readiness to go

through the forms at once, so there is no excuse for any further delay."

"The delay," answered La Ramee, "has been caused by a hope I felt that your heart may yet yield to the softer dictates of mercy. Remember, sir, it is yet in your power to restore her to the world, and in the name of our holy religion I call upon you to pause ere you consign a hapless girl in the prime of innocence and beauty, to a fate that you may, when too late, deplore."

"How can you ask me to do that," he sarcastically replied, "when but a short

time since she expressed the pleasure she felt in being thus put beyond my

"Aye," replied La Ramee, "but that was uttered when she saw no other hope left her. You, however, can release her from a promise that was given unwillingly, and I appeal to your generosity to keep her no longer in suspense."

"You ask me in vain," he replied, "for the pleasure I feel in thus gratifying my revenge is too great to be given up at the request of one who has assisted to

foil me."

"Then your heart feels no touch of pity?"

"None towards those who have deceived me," he replied.

"Nor do I ask for any as far as I am concerned," exclaimed Julia St. Pierre.

"You have wrecked my peace in this world, and where else can I better shelter myself than within the holy walls of St. Mary's convent. Here I have at least found a friend in the abbess, who will comfort me in my affliction, and if no other joy remains, I shall have the consolation of knowing that your bitter animosity and revenge can torture me no longer."

"You have forgotten those whom you will leave behind you in the world," he

said with a sneer.

"I have not forgotten them," she replied; "but I know that, though you can persecute a hapless girl, you will not dare provoke the fury of men who have the

power to protect themselves against your designs."

"Had those words been uttered by one of my own sex," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "they would have been resented. As it is, I know they cannot harm me, and therefore I can pardon them, and comfort myself at the same time that they were the outpourings of a heart tortured by the revenge I have secured for myself. So rail on, Julia, and I will listen to you without anger or impatience."

"Call you this the conduct of a man?" demanded Victor St. Pierre, scarcely

able to command himself.

"It matters little what I call it," returned the other in a tone of insolent defiance. "I have been wronged and deceived by those in whom I placed my reliance, and surely I may use an expression of my triumph when I see that everything is in my own favour."

"Not everything," exclaimed the abbess, "for you came here in the hope that Julia St. Pierre might be prevailed upon to become your bride; and you will

depart with a feeling of disappointment and regret."

"But perhaps my revenge may go further than you at present think for, holy

mother."

"You speak of revenge," she replied, "as if there was some great merit in it; I, however, warn you against indulging so baneful a feeling, for here are witnesses to the words you have uttered, and should anything occur, remember, they will be brought forward as testimony against you."

"Why how is this," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt. "I thought to have found you on my own side, but it seems somehow that you have taken part with those

who have without cause inflicted an injury on me."

"I am here to do justice, and therefore cannot favour the pretensions of one who has persecuted a woman for no other reason than that she does not love him."

"Why then did she suffer herself to be betrothed to me?" demanded Monsieur

"It was my fault for permitting it when I knew that her heart had already been given to another," answered Victor. "Had I been more firm, all this mis-

fortune would have been avoided,"
"And all may even now be avoided," exclaimed the abbess, "if Monsieur Mordaunt will only show some little pity to the hapless girl whom he would con-

sign for the rest of her life to a convent."

"I ask no pity from him," answered Julia; "for he has demanded the sacrifice, and I am now prepared to take those vows which will bind me to this place. My persecutor will still be able to roam wherever he pleases in the world, but I envy

him not his feelings,—if indeed he possesses any,—when he reflects on the un-

merited injuries he has heaped upon me."

"Young lady," exclaimed Mordaunt, "I am not here to listen to your reproaches, but to obtain your final answer upon a subject which you have had sufficient time to deliberate on. You know what my demands are, what must be the inevitable consequence if they are refused."

"They have been already refused."
"True, but it is not even now too late to change your mind. If there is any accusation to make against me, let it be done at once, that I may answer for it, for I am not aware of having done anything to deserve this treatment."

"I make no accusation," she exclaimed, "but I leave it to your own conduct, to say whether it would have required any great sacrifice on your part to give up your own claims in favour of the person to whom I was to have been wedded vesterday."

"You think then," he replied, "that it is no sacrifice to surrender to a rival the-

woman whom I love?"

"Monsieur Mordaunt," exclaimed Julia, "you dare not in this presence assert

that you ever really loved me."

"Indeed! why is it that I still persist in demanding the fulfilment of your promise, long since made?"

"Because it is a part of your revenge to make the remainder of my days un-

happy."
"How can you be unhappy," he asked, "when but now you preferred the

cloister to becoming my wife?

"I shall not be a prey to all the misery you desire," answered Julia St. Pierre, "but I do not deny that it will often occasion me pain, when I reflect on the despair of Monsieur Delmar at finding that all his hopes are for ever blighted."
"Oh," exclaimed Mordaunt, sneeringly, "you need not feel any anxiety on his

account, for no doubt, he will soon transfer his affections to some other female. You seem to doubt me," he added after a momentary pause, "but ere long, you will receive convincing proof that my prophecy has been realized."

"Perhaps so," answered Julia, "and much should I rejoice to hear of his marriage, if convinced that it would lead to the happiness of one whom I so much

regard."

"It would be a proof, though, that he had soon forgotten his first love," ex-

claimed Monsieur Mordaunt.

"This," interposed Victor St. Pierre, "is only said to wound the feelings of my sister, and I ask if it is manly or honourable to lacerate a heart that is already overwhelmed with affliction?"

"You will allow me, I suppose, to triumph when I see a just punishment over-take those who have injured me?"

"There is little merit in triumphing over the sorrows of a woman," answered Victor, "and more especially when that female is the one whom you falsely professed to love."

"Who, besides yourself, dares assert that I loved not your sister?"

"I am not thus easily to be intimidated from speaking my mind," exclaimed St. Pierre, "and you may perhaps yet hear more unpleasant truths of a similar nature if you persist longer in your demands. You have threatened, Monsieur Mordaunt, to exert your influence against me with the Dauphin, under whom I hold all the property I possess in the world. Do so; but be assured you will be disappointed, for your evil designs will be foiled, when his royal highness is made acquainted with the motives that have led to your abusing his confidence."

"Humph," retorted the other, "so you flatter yourself then that your in-

fluence in that quarter will be superior to mine?"

"I rely," answered Victor St. Pierre, "on the well known honour and love of justice that actuates all the conduct of the prince whom you would deceive with alse report."

"You deceive yourself in supposing that I shall resort to falsehood," exclaimed the other, contemptuously. "I shall tell him nothing but the truth, and there will be enough in that to bring down the anger that you affect to despise."

"Can it be possible," cried Julia, "that you would seek the ruin of one who

has never injured you."

"Victor St. Pierre has injured me," answered the other, "and the wounds are of such a nature that they are never likely to be healed. Have I not been robbed of her whom I expected to make my bride, and can I, think you, ever forget that I owe much of the mischief to your brother."

"My brother took no part in this affair."

"Then he ought to have done so," exclaimed Mordaunt. "He knew well enough that you had transferred his affections to my rival, and it was his duty to have reminded you of your vows to your absent lover."
"Nay, believe me you wrong him. My brother—"

"I will near no excuses made for him," interrupted the other, "nor will I longer delay the ceremony that makes you for ever an inmate of these walls." Then turning towards the abbess, he added:—"The preparations in the chapel are, I believe, complete, and nothing therefore remains but to perform the ceremony of taking the veil."

"Alas!" sighed La Ramee, "if you insist upon it, I have no alternative; yet once more I entreat you to change your purpose, and the reward will be in the

approbation of your own conscience."

"And once more I insist upon it, that you perform your duty without further remonstrance," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt. "She has scorned my love, and as the only retaliation in my power I consign her henceforth to the gloomy life of a nun.'

Julia heard him without manifesting any sign of disapproval, and approaching the abbess, she in a whisper expressed her readiness to go through the ceremony. All hope of a postponement was now at an end, and a procession having been formed, they left the room and proceeded with slow and solemn steps to the convent chapel.

## CHAPTER VI.

CHARLES DELMAR'S DESPAIR.—HE MAKES A LAST EFFORT.—THE REFUSAL AND ITS RESULTS.

DURING the time that the preceding scene was taking place, Charles Delmar was endeavouring to prevail on the porter at the gate, to give him admission to the convent. He still believed that there was a possibility of preventing the ceremony which he knew was about to be performed, and with the most earnest appeals to the humanity of the official, brought him to grant a request, upon which all his hopes of earthly happiness depended.

"I would willingly do what you ask," said the man, at length, almost overcome by his imploring accents, "but the truth is, Father Boneffe, our confessor, has just been here and given me strict orders not to give you admittance on pain of

the severest punishment that it is in his power to inflict."

"And what," demanded Delmar, "has this meddling priest to do with this

affair that concerns him not?"

"Ah," exclaimed Peter, "he is more interested in the case than you think for. The truth is, he has been walking nearly all the morning in the garden with Monsieur Mordaunt, and I rather fancy he has been promised a large reward to take part with your rival, in case there should be any chance of the young lady escaping the fate she has been doomed to."

"They suspect then that an attempt will be made to rescue her?"

"I'm partly certain they do," replied the man, "or they would not be so much afraid of your entering the convent. So you see, sir, if I was to grant your request, it would be with the certainty of being shut up for the rest of my life in one of our dungeons."

"But I would take care to protect you from their violence."

"Neither you nor anybody else could do that, if it was discovered that I had disobeyed their commands," answered the porter. "The truth is they have determined that Mademoiselle St. Pierre shall take the veil if she refuses to marry your rival, and if I baulked them in their designs, the heaviest punishment they can inflict would not be enough to satisfy them for having lent a helping hand to frustrate them."

"Yet I will defeat them in spite of all their precautions!"

"Ah, sir!" returned the man, "you little know what would be the consequence of your interference. I have seen what Father Boneffe is capable of doing, and it would be horrible if the young lady was to meet with a late and that of poor Sister Evelina."

"What was the fate you speak of?" demanded Delmar.

"Death!"

"What crime had she been guilty of, to deserve so fearful a punishment?" asked

the other, eagerly.

"Merely refusing to take the vow after she had once consented to do so," answered Peter. "She was taken unwillingly to the altar, and when it was found that no threats could prevail upon her to submit to the sacrifice, she was conveyed to her cell, and from thence to the mausoleum belonging to the chapel, where she was left to perish miserably by starvation."

"Monstrous!" exclaimed Delmar; "and did the abbess permit so fiendish an

act without remonstrance?"

"Poor lady," answered the other, "she did all in her power to save Sister Evelina from her horrible fate; but all was in vain."

"Boneffe, then, was deaf to her entreaties for mercy,"

"He was indeed, sir," he replied; "and having so much power in this place, the unfortunate girl was suffered to perish by a slow and lingering death. Indeed he took care that there should be no chance of escape, for he ordered that the key of the mausoleum should be brought to him, and no one was suffered to enter the place till the quiet that reigned there proved that all was over with the victim."

"Then for mercy's sake," exclaimed Delmar, "debar me not from going to the rescue of Mademoiselle St. Pierre. Nay, every moment of delay is fraught with danger, and, if all other means fail, I will force my way into the convent and save

her from the hands of the destroyer!"

"Remember, sir," answered Peter, "that would be considered a crime against

the church that your death alone could expiate."

"Let them wreak their utmost vengeance on me, and I will endure it all with resignation," exclaimed the young man. "I am resolute, as you see, and will ob-

tain admittance even though you close the gates upon me."

"There is only one way that it can be done," answered the porter, after a few moments' consideration. "I have in my lodge the habit of a friar, which you can put on, and then enter the chapel without attracting observation. But I caution you not to discover yourself, for if you do, it may cost your life as well as my own."

"Get me the habit," exclaimed Delmar, "and you, at least, I promise shall incur

unwillingly obeying this request, Peter slowly entered his lodge, and presently afterwards returned with the monkish garb, which he assisted to put on the young man.

"There, sir," he said, after the disguise had been completed; "there is no chance of any one detecting you, if you are prudent. But forget not

the warning I have given, or you may never again leave the place you are

"I will incur no risk if it can be avoided," replied Charles Delmar, "but no power on earth shall restrain me if I see that Julia St. Pierre is unwilling to submit to the sacrifice. In the meantime, here is money for the service you have done me, and rest assured that you, at least, shall not suffer for the kindly act you have performed."

"Your money I will not accept," answered Peter, returning the purse which had been slipped into his hand; "but will rely upon your promise not to incur danger. Within these walls you will be powerless, and I therefore pray you to consider what t madness it would be to dare the vengeance of such men as Monsieur Mordaunt and Father Boneffe. Go in peace—watch the proceedings—but do not interfere

with them, as you would preserve your own life."

"That, my good friend," answered Delmar, "will depend upon whether Julia St. Pierre voluntarily takes the veil. If she does, I will not disturb the solemnity of the occasion; but, upon the least sign of repugnance, I will rush forward to her rescue, even though death by the most cruel torture should be the consequence. You, however, will have nothing to fear, for nothing shall ever force from me a confession of the means by which I have obtained admittance!"

The porter would have repeated his caution, but Delmar had hurried away as he pronounced the last words, and taking his way towards the chapel, he could see, by the number of persons who were hurrying in, that the ceremony was about to take place immediately. Then drawing the hood of his habit more closely, so as completely to conceal his face, he entered the sacred edifice and approached the altar, before which he saw assembled those of whom ne was in quest. Fortunately no one took any notice of him, and gliding towards the monument which had on a previous occasion afforded him concealment, he so placed himself as to overhear all that passed without being seen.

"Julia St. Pierre," he heard Monsieur Mordaunt say, "you are now here to go through those rites which are far ever to exclude you from the world. Young and beautiful as you are, the fate is a dismal one, but it may yet be averted even at this late period, if you will consent that Father Boneffe shall unite us in marriage instead of administering the vow that binds you to a life of celibacy and

"I am firm in my resolve," she replied, in hollow accents, "and the confessor

can therefore proceed with his duty, without further delay."

"At any rate, you shall have time to reflect upon the alternative," exclaimed Mordaunt. "We will all retire, and leave you to consider in private upon an act that will influence the whole of your future life."

"I require no time for consideration," answered Julia; "for no punishment, however great it may be, will be equal to what I should suffer, were I to give my

hand to one whom, from my very heart, I despise."

"Rash girl?" he exclaimed, "will nothing move you to choose a life of happiness

and freedom in the world?"

"Happiness," she answered, "can never more be mine, since in either case must I be severed from the only being whom I would consent to wed. You have offered me time to reflect, Monsieur Mordaunt, but why should I trifle with those who are assembled here to witness my vows?"

"You may yet accept the alternative that has been offered."
"Never!" she exclaimed, resolutely. "Even the threat of death itself, would not prevail upon me to give myself in marriage to him who has thus persecuted me. Yonder priest, your own friend, waits to perform the ceremony, and as nothing will change my purpose, I demand that no further useless delay takes place, under the supposition that I will bestow my hand upon one who has proved himself my unrelenting persecutor."

"Daughter," said the abbess, drawing her a little on one side, "let me entreat

you not to be too rash in giving your final answer."

"And why," she asked, "should I postpone that which you have all met here

to witness?"

"Because," replied La Ramee, "I know you do not willingly embrace the life of secluision that is before you. If you take the veil through compulsion your heart will still be in the world which you have forsaken, and thus misery and despair will be your fature lot."

"Can my misery be greater," asked Julia, "than if I was to marry him whom I

abhor."



"Your abhorrence," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, who had overheard what passed, "is founded on an unjust prejudice, and therefore ought to form no ground of objection. Nay, your solemn promise has been given to me, and I askall who are here present, if I ought to yield up my own claim for no other reason than that you have proved fickle?"

"My only reply is, that you never passessed my love."

"Indeed; then why did you suffer the betrothal to take place?"

"I am not obliged to enter into any argument with you upon this painful subject," she replied; "but since the question has been put publicly, I reply that my consent was extorted by your threats of bringing ruin upon my brother."

"But you also knew that I loved you, or I should not have proceeded to such

an extent to procure your consent."

"On the contrary, I knew you regarded me with indifference."

"Had that been the case, I should have resigned you long since, instead of returning with all possible speed to France for the purpose of claiming the fulfil-

ment of your promise."

"I know your motive for the course you have adopted," answered the maiden. "You have ever regarded Monsier Delmar with hatred, and it was to wound him in the tenderest part, that you have preferred your own claim at the very moment when he was about to lead me to the altar."

"'Tis well for him that I returned at the moment I did," replied Mordaunt, bitterly, "for had I found you married to him he would have felt the full weight of my vengeance, instead of—as is now the case, being the object of my scorn."

"This is no place in which to boast of the villary that your heart may have conceived," exclaimed Julia, casting upon him a look of withering contempt. "We are assembled for the purpose of celebrating a religious rite, not to hear the outpourings of a heart that knows no other feelings than such as are engendered by malevolence. You have now heard my determination, sir, and I desire that no more may be said upon this subject. Your victim is prepared for her fate, and is ready to meet it without further delay."

"There shall be delay though," he replied "for I demand from the Lady Abbess and Father Boneffe that they grant you half an hour to consider which course

you had better adopt."

"If it is granted," she exclaimed, "it will be against my own wish, for my mind is already made up, and when the half hour has elapsed, my determination

will remain unaltered."

"My daughter," interposed Boneffe, with pretended humility, "this proposition of Monsieur Mordaunt should be accepted with gratitude, since it has been made to give you an opportunity of avoiding a fate that you would afterwards bitterly deplore."

"I should never regret my own voluntary act."

"So you think at present," answered the confessor, "but upon further deliberation, I feel assured you will save yourself from a destiny that I know you look upon with repugnance. Remember, the world is still open to you, and there are years of happiness in store, if you do not rashly destroy the last hope that remains to you."

"Happiness for me!" exclaimed Julia, shuddering. "Alas! what joy can I

ever know if united to one whom I never have, and never can love?"

"You shall at least have the opportunity afforded, that I have spoken of," said Mordaunt, interposing. "I and all who are assembled here will retire, and in half an hour we will return to know your decision. And let it not be forgotten, Julia, that in the event of your continued refusal, you will be consigned to a life of secousion, whilst I shall still be free to inflict my vengeance upon those whom you

profess to love."

He turned away as these words were uttered, and as all the assemblage followed his example, Julia St. Pierre was soon left in solitude to reflect upon the hapless condition to which she had been reduced. Hitherto she had maintained her firmness in a remarkable degree, but now her woman's weakness prevailed, and throwing herself upon her knees on the steps of the altar she gave way to tears which till this moment had been suppressed. Absorbed in grief, she was for a time unconscious that any one was present to observe her, but at length footsteps were heard, and suddenly turning her head towards the place from whence the sounds seemed to come, she recognised Charles Delmar advancing towards the spot where she knelt. At that moment a half suppressed cry of joy escaped her

lips, and starting upon her feet she rushed into the arms which were open to receive her.

"My own-my hapless Julia!" he murmured, "I am here to save you, or perish by your side. Be firm then, and I may yet rescue you from those who are leagued together for your destruction."

"Alas!" she sighed, "neither you nor any other power on earth can snatch me from my doom. I am fated either to take the veil, or become the bride of Mon-

sieur Mordaunt ere another half hour has passed away."

"I have heard all," he replied, "and rather than see you become the victim of persecution, I will lose my life in one attempt to save you from your foes."
"How have you obtained admission here?" she asked.

'By means of this friar's habit, which was lent me by the porter at the gate," he replied. "It enabled me to enter this chapel without suspicion, and concealing myself behind yonder tomb, I have been a spectator of the hard trial you have had to endure. But you tremble, Julia, as if still fearful of the violence of Mordaunt and his friends.

"It is not for myself that I tremble," answered Julia, "but for you, who will be the first object upon whom the terrible wrath of Monsieur Mordaunt falls."

"Let him look to himself," exclaimed her lover, "for he is in greater danger than I am. Aye, certain as he now feels of his triumph, I feel assured that the time is not very far distant, when he will bitterly suffer for the unjust persecution with which he has followed you."

"But he is an enemy too powerful to cope with," she replied, "and even should you be able to avoid his insidious snares, it will be too late, for choose which way I will, the ceremony that either binds me to this place or to him,

must be performed ere this day has passed away."

"Nay, have I not said that I am here to save you?"

"It is impossible," she exclaimed. "Violence can effect no good when there are so many against you, and I should have the misery of seeing you torn from me by those who, I too well know, are bent for your destruction."

"Is not your brother here to render me his assistance?" he asked.

"My brother left at my own request," answered Julia. "But surely he has not quitted the convent precincts ?"

"I know not where he is," she replied, "but I pray Heaven he may not be rash enough to join you in any attempt that must assuredly fail. And now, Charles, let me entreat you also to leave a spot where you are surrounded with danger. Fly ere it is too late, and leave me to go through the ceremony which

can alone prevent my becoming the bride of your rival."

"Never will I leave you in danger whilst life remains in me!" exclaimed Delmar, resolutely. "Have I not sworn to preserve you from the evil plottings of your foes, and shall I now retreat to save an existence that must ever be embittered if I see you become the victim of those who have combined, together to force you into an unwilling marriage."

"I ask you in mercy to myself, to spare me the agony of seeing you in the

hands of your remorseless enemies."

"My enemies here are not so many as you imagine," he replied. "Monsieur Mordaunt and the confessor are the only persons I have to fear, and even theyrevengeful as they are, can do no more than hand me over to those who administer the law. And fearlessly can I stand before my judges, knowing as I well do, that they will deal forth justice against my accusers, when they hear the provocation that urged me to interfere for your rescue from this place. But we waste moments that are most precious to us, Julia. Leave this place with me without delay, and I will conduct you to the house of your brother, where you will remain in safety till the whole affair has been fully inquired into by the proper authorities."

"Alas! there is no way to leave the convent," she exclaimed.
"Believe me, Julia, there is one certain way," answered her lover. "The porter at the gate will not refuse to let us pass, and you may be conveyed to a

place of safety before Monsieur Mordaunt and his friends have discovered your

"But they will immediately search my brother's house, and I should be dragged

forth by my unrelenting enemies."

"Not while my arm possesses strength to protect you from them," he replied. "Besides, if you will consent to it, I will immediately convey you across the

frontiers, where no further persecution can reach you."

"No," she exclaimed, after a pause, "I am not so selfish as to prefer my own safety to yours. I know the vindictive nature of Monsieur Mordaunt, and am therefore certain that if I was to escape the destiny he has resolved upon, he would turn all his wrath against you and my brother."

"And even supposing he did so," replied Delmar, "we are both of us capable of protecting ourselves against any plots that he might form to injure

us."

"Aye, but you would not know when the blow was about to fall upon you," answered Julia. "I intreat you, therefore, not to urge me any further upon this subject, but leave this place, ere the return of those whom I am expecting every instant."

"Leave you!" he exclaimed.

"Aye, or greater misery is yet in store for me."

"It is to save you from misery that I am here," he replied, "and having obtained admittance to the convent, I will not take my departure till either my object has been accomplished, or I am driven forth by violence."

"Alas! they will murder you before my eyes?"

"There is no fear of murder beneath the sacred roof that shelters us," answered Monsieur Delmar, "nor will they dare to lay violent hands upon me in the presence of the Lady Abbess and her nuns. So far, therefore, you see I am safe, and you will be spared the pain you anticipate."

"Yet sure," cried Julia, in despair, "you will not refuse my earnest request to leave this chapel before the return of Monsieur Mordaunt and those who

accompany him ?"

"At any other time I could refuse you nothing," he replied; "but now we have not a moment to lose, if you would escape the fate that has been prepared for you. Come with me, dearest Julia," he added, throwing himself upon his knees before her;—"follow me upon the instant, or I solemnly swear to brave the

vengeance of those who seek my destruction!"

Terrified at his danger, and scarcely knowing what she did, Julia St. Pierre murmured forth her consent, when Delmar, springing upon his feet, conducted her towards a small door at the side of the altar. This was instantly opened, and they were about to pass through when Monsieur Mordaunt who had been listening to their conversation, presented himself, and grasping each by an arm, forced them back into the chapel. At the same moment, the abbess accompanied by her nuns, and several monks, entered by the door which they had taken their departure.

"Holy mother," exclaimed Mordaunt, addressing himself to La Ramee. "I accuse this girl, Julia St. Pierre, of an attempt to escape the sacred cloisters to

which she was about to be devoted."

"Have patience, my son," she replied, "for ere a judgment is pronounced in this case, I must learn from her own lips whether, during our absence, she has preferred becoming your wife to taking those vows which are to constitute her a nun."

"You hear what the abbess says," exclaimed Mordaunt, addressing himself to Julia; "and now the time which was granted you having expired, I demand that

you no longer keep us in suspense as to your intentions."

"You can have had no doubt from the first," she replied, "for I declared that neither force nor persuasion, should induce me to marry one whom I am well assured loves me not."

"You are prepared then to meet your fate here?"

"Feel you no terror at the consequences that will follow your attempt to escape

from a convent in which you were to have taken the veil?"

"It may be death, for aught I know," exclaimed Julia; "but even if it be so I can endure it with firmness, knowing as I shall that it will at least release me from your persecution."

"Death it will be," he replied, "for such is ever the doom of those who trifle

with the religion they profess."

"Who dare accuse me of having trifled in so solemn anaffair?" demanded Julia, resolutely, "I have not yet taken the oaths that were to seclude me from the world, and that being the case, I have committed no crime in attempting to flee from a

place in which you would have me imprisoned for life."

"My daughter," exclaimed the hypocritical Boneffe, "you are inexperienced in the laws that govern our monastic institutions, and therefore it becomes my duty to warn you of the fearful danger in which you stand at this moment. You were solemnly betrothed to Monsieur Mordaunt, yet have refused to fulfil your engagement to him, and the only alternative that then remained to you was to take vows of perpetual celibacy. You have thus rendered yourself a servant of our holy church, and your attempt to escape from this place, when the ceremony of performing the rites was about to commence, will bring down upon you the severest punishment that our superiors have the power to inflict."

"Let them torture me with the utmost cruelty," she replied, "and I will endure

it without a murmur."

"But is there no one else?" asked the confessor, "who will suffer for this

obstinacy."

"I hope not," answered the maiden, "yet your words seem to imply that my brother, and Monsieur Delmar will be made to suffer for my refusal to sacrifice myself to a man whom I can never regard with any other feelings than abhorrence?"

"I do not say," replied the monk, "that Monsieur Mordaunt will persue the two persons you have named with his wrath, but remember he has been urged on to extremities by your own conduct, and you will be answerable for any sufferings

they may have to endure."

"Do not let that deter you from your purpose," exclaimed Charles Delmar, who having just succeeded in breaking away from the man who held him, rushed forward, "They would terrify you and placed himself between Julia and the confessor. into submission, but if you remain firm in your resolve, I will ere long find means to rescue you from the hands of those who would thus tyrannize over

you."

"You are all witnesses to what this madman has said," sneered Monsieur Mordaunt. "He would persuade her not to fulfil her vows, and to set at defiance the authority of those who perform the offices of our holy religion. Father Boneffe, I charge him with inciting yonder girl to rebel against the rules that govern our church, and it is therefore your duty to have him secured, in order that he may answer for his conduct before those who are appointed to punish the refractory.'

"My son," whispered Boneffe, drawing him aside so that their conversation might not be heard, "let me advise you not to be too precipitate in this affair, lest we proceed beyond the bounds of prudence. Be satisfied for the present with having the girl in our power, but do not just yet think of revenging yourself upon her brother and Monsieur Delmar, for I can aiready see that it would be dan-

gerous to meddle with them."

"What can they do," demanded Mordaunt, "if we accuse them of having aided and abbetted one who has dared to set the laws as well as the ministers of

our religion at defiance?"

"That they have done so, cannot be denied," answered the confessor, "and the time has been when we could have punished them with even death itself. But the eyes of mankind are more upon us than they used to be, and that which, in

by-gone times, was submitted to without a murmur, is now regarded as priestly tyranny and domination."

"Have you monks then become so weak that you no longer dare to assert your

ancient rights and privileges?"

"Our inclination to support both is as great now as ever it was," answered Father Boneffe. "We have seen with alarm our power gradually diminish, but the popular voice being against us, we are compelled to yield in some things rather than run the risk of exciting the anger of the people."

"Psha! what think you would the people care for your proceeding according to law against Monsieur St. Pierre and the man who has presumed to set himself up as my rival for the hand of her who I have claimed as my be-

trothed P's

We will speak further upon this subject on another occasion," returned the confessor; "at present I will not consent to any violence being offered to Monsieur Delmar, beyond that of compelling him to leave the convent. In that we are perfectly justified, and should he hereafter make any stir about the course we have adopted with respect to Julia St. Pierre, it will then be for us to see if means cannot be devised to punish him for having set our authority at defiance. So now return with me, my son, to the company, for I see their eyes are directed towards us, and it may be that we shall be suspected of being engaged together in a plot."

in a plot."

"I have been speaking to the holy confessor," said Mordaunt as they returned,
and he has prevailed upon me not to proceed more harshly in this affair than
can be avoided. Monsieur Delmar will therefore be suffered to depart, and if he

does so quietly, no further harm will befall him."

"And what," he asked, "if I remain here in defiance of you!"

"In that case," answered Mordaunt, "we have sufficient assistance here to force an intruder from the convent; and I shall have recourse to it, too, unless you immediately accept my terms, and take your departure from hence."

"By what authority do you take all this upon yourself?" demanded Monsieur

Delmar, haughtily.

"By the authority," answered the ether, "of one who is here in his own right, seeing that he has presented himself for the purpose of claiming the fulfilment of a promise made by Julia St. Pierre. I have been permitted to enter these walls as her betrothed husband, whilst you, having received no invitation, are an intruder whom it is my privilege to send away."

"Your imperious command will not be obeyed," answered Monsieur Delmar, firmly; "for as long as I can afford aid or protection to Julia St. Pierre, your

unfortunate victim, I will remain near her side."

On a sign being given, several men advanced and again laid hands upon Monsieur Delmar, who, overpowered by numbers, was unable to offer any effectual resistance. Once or twice it is true, he broke away from them, but at length others having come to their asistance, he was forcibly dragged from the chapel and conveyed to the convent gates, from whence he was roughly expelled, and the portals were closed upon him each he could sufficiently recover himself to regain admittance.

In the meantime Mordaunt was endeavouring by every means that he could think of to prevail on Julia to consent that the nuptial rites should proceed. Even the abbess, who was somewhat alarmed, seconded his entreaties, but all was without avail, for our heroine was more firm than ever in her refusal, and desired that no further attempts should be made to turn her from the course that she had resolved upon.

"It is in vain to urge this matter any further," she continued, addressing herself to La Ramee; "for if anything was wanted to increase my hatred towards Monsieur Mordaunt, he has, himself, furnished it by the violence he has just used towards

one whose only offence is, that he has gained my regard."

"For which," exclaimed Mordaunt, "he has yet to feel the heavy weight of my displeasure."

"Monsieur Deimar," she replied, "knows the villany his foe is capable of committing; and will, therefore, be prepared to guard himself against an act of

treachery.'

"We shall soon see who is to triumph in this instance," returned Monsieur Mordaunt; "and you, Julia, may console yourself with the reflection that both your lover and your brother have been thrown into my power through your own wilful obstinacy; and bitter will those thoughts be, coming upon you as they will, in the wretched dungeon in which you will be doomed to linger out the miserable remainder of your existence."

Unable to afford any assistance, or to prevail upon Julia St. Pierre to submit to the ceremony, the abbess and her nuns left the chapel, and the hapless girl thus found herself thrown entirely upon the mercy of Monsieur Mordaunt and the confessor, from neither of whom had she the slightest reason to hope for compassion; she listened to them for some time without making any reply, for, besides the abhorrence with which she regarded them both, her heart was just then too full for utterance. This incensed Mordaunt to the highest degree, and after conferring a moment or two with the monk, he suddenly grasped her round the waist, and accompanied by Boneffe as a guide, conveyed her to the loathsome vault, beneath the chapel, which served as the convent cemetery.

## CHAPTER VIL

THE TWO FRIENDS MEET AND CONCERT SCHEMES. A VISIT TO AN OFFICIAL. A SURPRISE.

DISTRACTED by his fears respecting the fate of Julia St. Pierre, her lover could not leave the neighbourhood of the convent during the whole of that night, but continued pacing round the walls, in the vain hope that some one would at length appear from whom he might learn what had taken place after his violent expulsion. The gates, however, remained closed till the morning, when he ventured to knock for the porter, expecting that from him he should be able to gather sufficient information to enable him to form some plan by which he might contrive to rescue Julia from the hands of those whose mercy had been appealed to her in vain. But the porter upon seeing who it was that had knocked at that early hour, exhibited symptoms of the greatest alarm, refused to hold any communion with him for fear of being discovered; and in a few hurried words entreated him to leave the place without delay, unless he would render matters even worse then they were Delemar would still have persisted in his attempt, but the man suddenly withdrew himself; the gate was again closed, and all hope of gaining information from that quarter was at an end.

Uncertain what step next to take, Monsieur Delmar continued still to hover about the place, till the number of persons passing and re-passing warned him that the morning was pretty well advanced. Unwilling to attract observation, he then reluctantly left the spot, and made his way towards the house of Monsieur St. Pierre, hoping that, together, they might yet concert some scheme by which to rescue Julia from the danger into which she had fallen. Pursuing his way with extreme rapidity, he soon reached the place of destination, and upon being shown into the sitting-room, found his friend, Victor, no less a prey to anxiety than he was himself. Their meeting was a melancholy one, and the first salutations and enquiries being over, they began to consult together upon the best means by which they might snatch our heroine from the perilous situation in which she was At length, after various schemes had been proposed and rejected as

impracticable, Delmar inquired of his friend if he had communicated to the chief officer in the town the events which had occurred within the last few hours?

"At present," answered Monsieur St. Pierre, "I have been unsuccessful in my attempts to see the mayor; but it was my intention this morning to wait upon his worship, and lay before him a statement of all that has taken place. Such seems to be the only course to pursue, but it must be confessed I entertain very faint expectations from that quarter."

"Is he then a friend of Monsieur Mordaunt's?"

"I believe not," answered St. Pierre; "but our civil magistrates seldom like to interfere in matters connected with the church, and as Julia is claimed by Father Boneffe, the mayor will be too much alarmed for his own safety to trouble himself with a matter that may get him into trouble."

"But surely he will not refuse to perform his duty?'
"The truth is, my dear friend," exclaimed Monsieur St. Pierre, "I doubt whether his worship will consider it a part of his duty to act upon any information that he may receive upon this subject. We will, however, if you like, see him, and urge the necessity of immediate steps being taken to prevent the mischief that

we have but too much reason to suspect is intended."

"And if we fail in that," cried Monsieur Delmar, "I will, without delay, seek an interview with the bishop of this district, and claim his interference to snatch your unfortunate sister from the hands of the people who would deprive us of her. And should that also fail, I will present a petition to the king, imploring him to cause an immediate inquiry to be instituted into the detention of your sister against her own will."

"Your zeal in behalf of my sister is indeed most kind," exclaimed Monsieur St. Pierre, "but I am afraid even the king himself would hesitate before he did anything that might be supposed to encroach on what the church calls its

"Surely you do not believe that he would allow any of his subjects to suffer from an act of cruel tyranny and oppression, when he has it in his own power to

"He would not willingly do so, I dare say," replied Victor, "but, unfortunately, the ministers of our religion claim for themselves the management of their own affairs, and hence arise the many abuses of which we hear complaint made. His majesty, I have no doubt, would feel for the sufferings of Julia, if they were made known to him, but he dare not interpose, lest his own crown should be endangered by it."

"At any rate," exclaimed Monsieur Delmar, "if all other attempts should fail, I will not fear to approach the royal presence, and make known the grievance of which we complain. I scarcely expect to fail, but even if I should, the whole affair will be made public, and we shall then see how much longer the people will endure tyranny from the church, greater than they would permit to be practised

by the sovereign himself."

"You are zealous in our behalf, I see," answered St. Pierre, "but the power we have to contend against is far greater than you appear to imagine. Besides, we have the malignity and bitter feeling of Monsieur Mordaunt to endure, and we both know enough of him to be assured that he, backed as he will be by the priesthood, will make such representations against us, as will defeat any efforts that we may make to obtain justice for my unfortunate sister."

"Yet we must not forsake her in this terrible hour of trial."

"You mistake me, if you imagine that I am lukewarm in the affair," answered St. Pierre, "for the truth is, my mind has been constantly occupied since last night in devising schemes for averting the mischief that our enemy is seeking to bring on us. It is necessary, however, that we should be extremely cautious, and therefore, whatever we do must be done as secretly as possible. This, my dear Charles, it is necessary to explain, lest you should imagine that I am not exerting myself with sufficient energy on behalf of my poor Julia."

"Nay," exclaimed the other, "how can I think that when I know the

brotherly kindness that she has ever experienced from you. On the other hand however, I may be permitted to observe that too much caution leads to delay, and in the present instance there is not a moment to be lost."

"I know it," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, "and am ready to act according to your suggestion, if you can show any means by which we may hope to attain

our end."

"Have you any objection then to go with me to the mayor, in order that we may take his advice upon the subject?"



" I have no other than was just now stated."

"Which is, that you are afraid his worship will not interfere."

"Exactly so."
"Very bell," answered Monsieur Delmar, "then in the event of a failure in that quarter, other means must be tried. Nay, if all other means should fail, I will climb over the convent wall and bear away your sister in spite of all opposition."

"Have you reflected upon the danger that would bring upon yourself?"

No. 7.

"I am aware of the consequences, but fear them not," answered the young man; "desperation has made me reckless, and whatever may be my own fate, I will yet save Julia from the hands of her two persecutors."

"Two persecutors!" exclaimed St. Pierre, "has your rival any colleague in

this affair?"

" He has."

"Who is the person alluded to?"

" Father Boneffe, the confessor to the convent."

"Impossible! the world has always represented him to be a pious and zealous

minister of religion."

"The world is then much mistaken in his character," answered Charles Delmar, for I have the best means of knowing that he is to receive a large reward from Mordaunt in return for the villanous part he is playing."

"Are you sure the information is correct?"

"There can be no doubt of it," replied Charles Delemar, " for I received tfrom the porter, who overheard a conversation upon the subject between the confessor and Monsieur Mordaunt, as they were walking in the convent gardens."

"But the man may have been incited to say this by motives of revenge."

"Such a thing might have been certainly," answered the other, "but upon a careful consideration of the man's evidence, and comparing it with many things that have occurred, I am inclined to put the fullest reliance in every word he told me; besides, he could have had no bad motive for making me acquainted with these facts, seeing that he would be in no little danger if it should be discovered that he has made false statements against one of the fraternity to which he belongs."

"Whether his statement be false or true," answered Monsieur St. Pierre, "he would not escape severe punishment if it should ever be known that he has spo-

ken of any affair connected with the convent or its inmates."

"Nay," returned the other, "he went further than that, for I heard from the same source that an unfortunate sister, named Eveline, if I remember rightly, who was shut up in the chapel cemetery and there left to perish by a miserable and lingering death from starvation."

"Merciful heaven!" exclaimed Victor; "then my sister may ere this have been

doomed to the same fate."

"There is but too much reason to fear it," answered the young man, "and I therefore mentioned the subject, from a conviction that nothing would so quickly move you to immediate action as to know that the life of Julia is not safe whilst she remains within those accursed walls."

"Yet the character of the lady abbess has procured for her the regard and respect

of all her neighbours."

"And very deservedly, I believe," answered Charles Delmar, "for I believe the favourable report you alluded to has resulted from the piety and zeal with which she discharges her duties. She is, however, a timid and somewhat weak-minded woman, and as father Boneffe has contrived to obtain considerable command over her, she is afraid to offer objections to any propositions he may make, however base they may be. Hence it came about that she made no great exertions to rescue the unfortunate sister Eveline from the horrible fate I have just now alluded to."

" Julia then is not safe in the convent, if Father Boneffe and Monsieur Mordaunt

are in league together."

"That is exactly the point I wanted you to see," exclaimed Charles Delmar. "She is not safe in that place, and immediate application must be made to the mayor, or our exertions to save her will come too late."

Let us go to him without delay," cried the other, eagerly starting from his seat —" every moment is of consequence, and never will my mind be at rest till I have

succeeded in rescuing Julia from the place where she is confined."

Charles Delmar was equally anxious to commence the business at once, and in a few minutes afterwards they set out for the house of the mayor. On arriving there

they found that he was engaged with some one else, but in about a quarter of an hour afterwards the servant returned and conducted them to a private apartment, where his worship was waiting to receive them. The statement they had to make was given in few words, and on its conclusion he asked with some; little amazement if (they really imagined the young lady of whom they spoke was in danger whilst under the care of so pious a woman as La Ramee was reported to be?

"Against the lady abbess," replied Delmar, "I have not a word to say; but there is one person belonging to that establishment, who I believe is capable of com-

mitting any crime if instigated by the promise of a reward."

"Take care what you say, young man," exclaimed the mayor, in a tone of rebuke, "for the law punishes with the utmost severity those who make unjust charges against the professors of religion."

"But the law," answered Delmar, "is not so unjust as to punish persons when

the accustion is founded on truth."

"Who is it of whom you speak?"

"Father Boneffe."

"Why this is most monstrous," exclaimed the mayor; "surely there must be some mistake in this, or else you are actuated by feelings of revenge for some supposed injury, to speak against the character of a man who is said to be exemplary for his piety."

"People may have been deceived," answered Charles Delmar, "but I again assert the fact, and may hereafter prove it if circumstances should require the expo-

sure."

"Do you know anything against Father Boneffe?" inquired the magistrate addressing himself to St. Pierre.

"I have only heard this report very lately," replied the young man; "but I have long suspected that he was not what he would fain have the world believe."

"In other words you are satisfied that the opinion formed by your friend of

the character of Father Boneffe is too well founded to be discredited."

"Had I not thought so I should not have troubled your worship with a visit today." answered Victor. "I believe him capable of great excesses, and as my sister unfortunately happens to be an inmate of the convent, I fear she may meet the fate of another female, who some time since perished miserably through the instigation of that man."

"The matter should be inquired into at any rate," exclaimed the magistrate; "though, to speak my mind freely, I believe you have both been imposed upon by an idle rumour spread abroad by some concealed enemy of the father con-

fessor."

"If there had been the slightest chance of the rumour being a false one, I would never have repeated it," said Charles Delmar; "I have, however, satisfied myself that the facts are as I have stated them, and I shall therefore never rest satisfied till I have exposed the baseness and hypocrisy of this priest to all the world."

"Young gentleman," exclaimed the magistrate, "you must beware how you speak of men like Father Boneffe. Hitherto his character has been of the highest standing, and should this accusation of yours prove unfounded, you will not only receive the censure of the world, but proceedings will be taken that may produce ruin to yourself."

"I am content to run all risks," he replied, "for the villany of the man ought to be exposed; and should there be occasion for it, I can, at an hour's notice, produce a man who will reveal the the horrors that were committed in at least one

case that I know of."

"Still," observed his worship, "it seems to me that you are making this charge upon the report of some other person, who for aught we know, may have been instigated by motives of private revenge. By the bye, you have not yet told me who your informant is."

"Nor can I do so just at present."

"Indeed! then that confirms me in my notion that there is no truth in it."

"If," exclaimed Charles Delmar, "there should be any occasion for it hereafter, I will name the person who told me these strange stories about Father Boneffe."

"Why not at once?" asked the mayor.

"At present it would be most ill advised for him to do so," interposed Monsieur St. Pierre. "Our object in seeing you to-day is to ask if you can give any assistance towards getting my sister out of St. Mary's convent?"

"Before I answer that question," exclaimed the magistrate, "I would know if you are aware of the danger I should incur were I to take any part against the

ministers of our religion?"

"I know there is some chance of your giving them offence," replied Victor; but having a duty to perform, I think you should act in this case as if Father

Boneffe had no interest in it whatever."

"Very good, young gentleman," returned the other;—you certainly have me there, but knowing as I do, instances in which men have been utterly ruined through their interference with the clergy, it must not occasion much surprise that I am unwilling to mix myself up in this affair of yours."

"In plain words," exclaimed Monsieur Delmar, "if we want justice we must

go somewhere else to seek for it."

"You can please yourself about that," replied the mayor in a tone of indifference, "for, in spite of the anger it may occasion I shall avoid as much as possible by chance of coming in collision with those who may hereafter endeavour to do me an injury."

"It seems then," returned Delmar, " that a young and helpless female is to have no assistance from you, even though her life is in peril from the foes in whose hands

she now is?"

"This, my good sir, is a subject which ought not to be carried any further," replied the magistrate, completely at a loss what to say. "The affair, as it at present stands, is [a one-sided one, and probably if I was to hear what the other party has to say about it, I should only be the more confirmed in my present opinion. At all events I have every reason to believe that Father Boneffe would not be guilty of the oppression he has been charged with;—he is respected by all whom I have heard speak of him, except yourself; and I dare say, when inquiries are made into this matter, I shall have reason to be well satisfied at not having taken a hasty step without first waiting to know the truth of the case."

"Do you imagine, sir," asked Charles Delmar, haughtily, "that we come here

to utter a falsehood?"

"Far from it, my young a friend," answered the official, "so I beg of you not to put yourself out of temper when there is no occasion for it. I have no doubt the sister of your friend is in the convent of St. Mary against her inclination; but there must be some cause for it, that I am not at present acquainted with, and I therefore decline taking any part in the transaction till I am better assured that my interference is called for."

"Are we to understand that we must not expect any assistance here!" asked

Victor St. Pierre.

"Certainly you are."

"And suppose we obtain positive proof that she has been shut up in one of the convent dungeons?"

"In that case you will see me again about the subject, and I will consider what

shall be done."

We have already sufficient reason to believe that she is a prisoner there,"

observed Charles Delmar.

"Suspicions without proof are of no use when you want to apply for the protection of the law," answered the magistrate. "It is my duty to afford assistance in all cases when there are sufficient grounds to believe that the weak are suffering from the oppression of the strong, but were I to listen to the suspicions of all who apply to me I should find myself in trouble from the beginning to the end of my year of office."

"It appears to me," exclaimed Delmar, that you can believe nothing against Father Boneffe, who I accuse of having leagued with Monsieur Mordaunt to persente if not to destroy the circum of my friend?"

secute, if not to destroy the sister of my friend."

"Beware how you speak of a man so renowned for his piety and good conduct," returned the mayor sternly. "You may have some purpose to serve thus in traducing his character, but for my own part I will hear nothing against him till witnesses have been produced to confirm your statement."

"You hear what he says," exclaimed Delmar turning to his friend. "Nothing that we can say will make any impression upon him, and I therefore suggest that we leave this place, and take other means to prevent the mischief that in a few

hours may not be repaired."

"Before you go, young man," said the mayor, scarcely knowing what to make of the affair, "you will allow me to suggest that you are not to run away with the notion that I refuse to do justice, from any false impressions of my own. I have heard the statement you had to make, and if at any time you come here to ask my assistance upon what may be deemed substantial grounds, you will not

find me backward in performing the duty I have been intrusted to fulfil."

Finding that neither argument nor persuasion could move the magistrate from this point, the two young men took their leave of him, and retraced their steps, somewhat discomfited, towards home. At length, on reaching a certain point of their road, they separated, St. Pierre taking his own route, and Charles Delmar making his way once more towards the convent of St. Mary. There he once more wandered about in the hope of meeting with some one from whom he might gather information respecting Julia, but after some time had been passed uselessly in this way, he retired from the spot with a mind more than ever dispirited by the uncertainty with which he was environed.

In the course of his walk homewards, Charles Delmar thought over a thousand plans, all of which were directed towards one object—that of releasing Julia from the danger in which he knew she was involved. No scheme, however, could he resolve on, and at length on reaching his house he was about to retire to his own solitary chamber, when a servant informed him that a gentleman had been for some time waiting his return in the parlour. Wondering who this could be, he proceeded at once to the apartment, and on entering discovered to his infinite surprise that his visitor was no other than Monsieur Mordaunt, who immediately rose from his

seat, and with much seeming cordiality came forward to meet him.

"You are doubtless surprised to see me here," he said; "but the truth is I could not rest satisfied after what transpired yesterday in the chapel of St. Mary's convent. Unfortunately, Monsieur Delmar, our inclinations lead us both the same way, we are attached to the same lady, and unless one of us is inclined to give up

his claim, she will be the chief sufferer through our obstinacy."

"It needs no prophet to foretel that," answered Delmar in a cold, constrained tone, "and I therefore venture to presume that you have come to tell me that, upon consideration, you have resolved to give up those pretensions which have led to so much uneasiness to Mademoiselle St. Pierre."

"In the first place," returned the other, "I must know if you are prepared to

argue this affair without anger."

"Certainly I am," replied Charles.

"It may be right in the first place then," said Monsieur, "to inform you that after a good deal of consideration, I do not feel that it is I who ought to give way, seeing that the young lady was long since betrothed to me."

"Then you might have spared yourself the trouble," replied Charles Delmar, for I cannot see but that we both of us stand in the same relative position we

did before."

" Except that you have had time to reflect upon the injustice of depriving me

of one whom I love."

"Had I been certain that you loved her," answered Delmar, "I would have concealed my own regard, rather than deprive you of a prize so worthy of being contended for. I had however, reasons for believing that you never felt any real

affection for Julia St. Pierre, and as her preference had evidently been given to me, I asked for, and received her consent to become my wife, at a time when your long absence from France had afforded sufficient grounds for believing the rumour of your having been lost at sea."

"All that may be very true," replied Monsieur Mordaunt, "but as I have returned to claim my promised bride, it cannot be doubted that my pretensions

are superior to yours,"

"Had the young lady thought so, I would have yielded my own claims upon the instant," answered Delmar: "you have, however, heard what she had to say upon the subject, she has absolutely refused to unite herself to a man whom she declares she never loved, and yet you, in spite of that declaration, still persecute her. Nay, so far are you carried by revenge, as to insist upon her becoming the inmate of a convent for life unless she bestows her hand upon you, and little is it to be wondered at that Julia St. Pierre has utterly rejected the offer of one who has caused her so much suffering."

"But she would yield if you consent to forego your own unjust claims to her

hand.'

"I doubt it," exclaimed Delmar, "but even if it were likely, I would not release Julia St. Pierre from her promise, knowing as I do that by doing so I should be the means of uniting her to a man who has proved himself so regardless of her happiness."

"Be cautious what you say," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "for my wrath is easily excited, and upon this subject I can least endure your reproofs or sarcasm."

"Your wrath I despise as much as I do yourself," returned the other, "and, aware as you must be of my feelings towards you, I must needs confess feeling no

little surprise at receiving a visit from you."

"Rely upon it I should not have come for any other reason than the one that brought me here," answered Monsieur Mordauat, "I thought it was still possible that you might exert yourself to produce a change in the fate of Julia St. Pierre, and such was the motive that brought me here."

"What was the change you expected?"

4 A more favourable opinion with respect to myself."

" That is utterly impossible, for she can never regard you otherwise than she now does."

"And that is, with hatred."

6 Perhaps it may be so, answered Charles Delmar, "but be that as it may, I possess no such influence as you imagine over Mademoiselle St. Pierre. Nay, even if I did I should not exert myself in favour of one who deserves not the regard he is anxious to obtain."

"This insolence may be carried too far," exclaimed Mordaunt; "hitherto I have had tolerable command over my temper, but I may soon be urged into doing

that which nothing can afterwards repair."

"If your threat applies to me," returned the other, "I at once reply that I fear nothing that you can do either secretly or openly. That you are capable of committing crime there is no reason to doubt, and that even a helpless female is not safe; from your persecution, we have had a lamentable p oof within the last few hours."

"The female you speak of has brought it all upon herself."

"By refusing to unite herself with you."

"Aye; I had her plighted word to become mine, and when at length I claimed the fulfilment of her promise, she spurned me as if I had been a dog."

"But not till you had provoked her by insisting upon what you called your

right."

"And that right I still maintain; and if she obstinately refuses she shall never leave the convent to which I devote her, for the remainder of her days."

"Think you then," demanded Monsieur Delmar, "that she is to be forced into pronouncing vows that would for ever afterwards separate her from the world,"

"She cannot help herself," replied the other, "for she must either consent to be my wife, or become a nun."

"You cannot force her to pronounce the vows that would be necessary in either

case.

"But she knows the dreadful penalty, and therefore will hardly suffer her obstinacy to carry her much further."

"What is the penalty you speak of?"

" Death."

"Ha! death for refusing to marry you!"

"Even so," replied Mordaunt, carelessly. "Tis thus the church punishes those who break their sworn engagements, and if she will not take the veil, after having rejected me, her fate will be what I have said."

"By what means would they deprive her of life?" demanded Charles Delmar,

shuddering.

"She will be inclosed in the cemetery among the mouldering forms of the sisterhood who have already passed into eternity, and will there be left to perish miserably by starvation."

"Monster!" exclaimed the other, "and you can exult in the horrible sufferings

that are to be inflicted upon this helpless girl through your means."

"To be sure I can," he replied;—" has she not made me suffer, and shall I

have pity on one who has treated me with marked dislike?"

"She only exercised the right which all women possess, of rejecting those whom they do not approve."

"Then why did she permit the farce of betrothing herself to me?" demanded

Monsieur Mordaunt.

"That is a question that scarcely need have been asked," replied the other, for you know she was urged and even intimidated into the performance of that ceremony."

"And as it seems, without any intention of completing that which she had

begun."

"I know not how that may be," answered Monsieur Delmar, "but most solemaly can I swear that she refused to accept my addresses till after your long absence appeared to confirm the news of your death. Then, and not till then, was I permitted to hope that she would become mine.

"Well," exclaimed the other, "and granting all that to be true, there is no excuse for her having rejected me when I returned and thus disproved the rumours

that had been circulated of my death."

"You make no allowance then for the position in which she found herself

placed?"

"I can see no excuse that even your ingenuity can invent for her," answered Monsieur Mordauut. "It is true she had in the interval accepted the offer of my rival, but she well knew that it was her duty to yield him up in favour of him who had obtained her first promise."

"Or," exclaimed the other, "was it not rather your duty to release her from that obligation, rather than bring misery and despair upon one whom you falsely

professed to love?"

"Would you have done so, had our situations been reversed."

" I would."

"Then all I can say is that we differ widely in our opinions," he replied, "for I confess a feeling of triumph in knowing that I still have it in my power to punish the woman who has treated me with coldness and neglect. Julia St. Pierre has roused all this bitterness within me, and now she must endure the consequences."

"Have you no pity for her?"

"None."
"Will it not satisfy you if all your vengeance falls upon me instead of

"Both shall feel the wrath that has been stirred up within me," answered

Mordaunt, fiercely. "You, as well as Julia St. Pierre, shall be made to feel how

fearfully I can revenge myself for the injuries that have been done me."

"A helpless and almost friendless girl, you may obtain some triumph over," answered Monsieur Delmar; but I am your equal in all things except baseness, and you will yet find to your cost that a foe has at length been roused who will defeat the villany you have projected."

"Indeed," returned the other, disdainfully, "and how, pray, are you to defeat

me?"

"There are many ways of doing it," exclaimed the young man, "but the most certain, as well as the most expeditious, will be to represent the whole affair to his majesty, and entreat his interference to snatch Julia St. Pierre from the fate you have prepared for her."

"Are you simple enough to imagine that his majesty has nothing else to do than to give ear to the complaints of all who would have the presumption to

approach him?"

"Report says that he is humane," replied Delmar; "and if he has a particle of feeling in his bosom, he will not withhold his assistance when it is requested in behalf of an oppresed girl. You smile at my words incredulously, but ere many hours are over, you may have to answer in the king's presence for your base conduct towards Julia St. Pierre."

"You will not see his majesty," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt; "and even if you did, he would not believe me guilty of the acts you would lay to my charge."

"Nay, flatter yourself not with that hope, for I go not without taking a witness with me."

"Humph-Monsieur St. Pierre of course?"

"He is the person I mean," replied Delmar; "and our united voices will not be so vainly raised as you imagine. We will denounce you, Monsieur Mordaunt, and thus the triumph over your hapless victim, which you have imagined with so much satisfaction, will come to a speedy termination.

"Do you really believe I am to be thwarted so easily?" asked the other with a

sneer.

"I am sure of it."

"Then prepare yourself for disappointment," exclaimed Mordaunt, "for knowing as I now do, your intentions in this matter, I shall be prepared to defeat them with vary little trouble. The dauphin will easily be persuaded to speak favourably of me to his majesty, so that, instead of being believed you will incur the royal displeasure, and the ruin of yourself, as well as Monsieur St. Pierre, will speedily follow your appearance at court,"

"I will run the risk at any rate."

"You had better take my advice, and not interfere with matters that concern you not," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt. "It seems you feel a warm, and perhaps a sincere interest in behalf of Julia, and instead of endeavouring to make matters worse for her it would be a much wiser course to do that which will save her from the terrible suffering to which she will be doomed."

"I will save her in the way I have said."

"Then for the last time I warn you to do nothing to call forth my revenge," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "If you have loved Julia St. Pierre, it is now time to yield up any pretensions you may have formed, for my own claims are paramount, and nothing shall ever induce me to give way. Promise me that you will see her no more, and write a letter to Julia to that effect, and if in less than three days she consents to accept my hand she shall be released from the great perils with which she is surrounded. It is in your power to save her, and if she should perish by a miserable death, remember it will be you who have brought it on her. Reflect on my words, and to-morrow I will see you again, to ascertain what decision you have come to."

Delmar would have replied to him, but he immediately turned away, and left the

room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE CEMETERY AND ITS LIVING INMATE.—THE VISIT OF CONSOLATION.—LA

Nothing can be imagined more revolting than the place to which Julia had been conveyed at the termination of her last interview with Mordaunt. As we have before said, it was the cemetery beneath the convent chapel, and there, with



no companions save the mouldering remains of the nuns, she was doomed to pass some hours in sad reflections upon the fate which there was only one way to avoid. It was true she had been told that she would be released immediately upon a promise being given to wed Monsicur Mordaunt, but if he had been hateful to her before, how much more so had he now become, when she beheld in him the heartless persecutor who had brought her to a state of unparalleled suffering? Her heart still clung to Charles Delmar, and loathing his rival as she did, she resolved to choose even the most lingering and tormenting death to becoming the bride of so relentless a monster.

No. 8.

The whole night was passed in reflections of this kind, and when at length day-light struggled through the small apertures that were intended to give ventilation to the vault, she was still firmly fixed in the determination to which we have alluded. Nothing, she felt assured, would ever change that resolution, or induce her to consent to an union against which her heart revolted. Thus resolved, she rose from the ground upon which she had been lying, and was advancing towards one of the openings to inhale the fresh air, when the door of the vault was opened, and one of the nuns, in whom she recognised Sister Theresa, entered the horrible vault. The captive shrunk back as if alarmed, and in trembling accents demanded if she had come to conduct her once more into the presence of the villain who had consigned her to that fearful abode of death.

"Be not alarmed, my love," answered the nun in accents of kindness, "for in me you will find a friend even if all the world beside should forsake you. I am here to offer what consolation I can, and to bid you hope that ere long you will be

released from this place."

"Alas!" sighed Julia, "that afflicts, rather than affords me consolation."

"Do you then wish to perish here, my sister?"

"Aye, for death will be preferable to the miseries that I should have to endure

were I again at liberty."

"But your friends are already exerting themselves in your behalf, and I am in hopes a short time will serve to crown their efforts with complete success."

"Of what friends are you speaking?"
"Your brother and Monsieur Delmar."

"Ha! have they been here?"

"The porter tells me," answered Sister Theresa, "that Monsieur Delmar endeavoured to prevail on him to give him admission not long since."

"And he refused to do so?"

"What, alas, could poor old Peter do?" exclaimed the nun. "Orders have been given by Father Boneffe that no persons are to be admitted except Monsieur Mordaunt, and he claims to come in whenever he pleases as a matter of right."

" Has he been here yet this morning?" asked Julia.

"I have not seen anything of him," she replied, "but I believe the lady abbess expects him here in the course of the day."

"Then tell her from me," exclaimed Julia, "that I will not see him upon any

consideration."

"I am afraid your refusal will be of very little use if he is determined about it."

"Is not La Ramee sole mistress here?"

"She is," replied the nun; "but Father Boneffe has as much if not more power than she claims to have. In fact, our abbess, though a good woman, is rather a weak one, and the confessor, taking advantage of it, has prevailed on her to consent to your being confined in this dreadful place, though I know it is much against her inclinations."

"Does she know of your having come to visit me?"

"Oh yes, I told her what I was going to do, and when she heard it she seemed pleased, and desired me to try all my best exertions to persuade you to yield to the demands of Monsieur Mordaunt, rather than by a refusal to provoke his further displeasure."

"Tell the abbess then, from me," exclaimed Julia, "that I will rather endure the

horrors of this place than ever consent to become the wife of that monster."

"But reflect, my child," said Sister Theresa, "and do not by your obstinacy draw upon yourself a fate that I tremble to think of. Remember, you are in the power of the man whose will you resist, and I fear there is no hope from him unless you yield to the necessity that controls your fate."

"His power," answered Julia," cannot go no further than it has already done. I know the worst, and am prepared to endure any torments rather than bestow

my hand upon one whom my heart holds in abhorrence."

"You have forgotten then that he may next turn his rage against the man you love."

"I am aware of the dreadful vengeance his hatred may urge him to," answered Julia, " but I also know that Charles Delmar has a bold heart, and he has therefore little to fear from his rival, who is as dastardly as he is vindictive. Besides, he knows the enemy he has to deal with, and will prepare himself against any scheme that may be concocted."

"But Monsieur Mordaunt will work with secrecy and caution."

"No doubt he will, yet, with Heaven's aid, Charles will be able to defeat his schemes."

"And in the mean time what will be your fate?"

"I am aware that it will be a fearful one," replied Julia St. Pierre, "but the thought of my own sufferings shall never induce me to accept my deliverance on the terms that have been prepared."

"Has this place then no terrors for you?"

"It has, indeed," she replied, "but my hope lies in a speedy release by death."

"Nay," exclaimed Sister Theresa, "the death you anticipate will come in the most cruel form that can be imagined. At present you are allowed food, in the hope that a little reflection will serve to change your purpose, but Monsieur Mordaunt will not wait more than a few hours, and then you will be shut up in this fearful vault to perish by a lingering death amongst the mouldering forms of the nuns who have here found their last resting place on earth."

"It may be so," answered Julia, "and yet there are those who will spare no efforts to obtain my rescue from the villain who has brought me to this dreadful

pass."

"Is that your only hope?"

"Nay, I have scarcely ventured to indulge the hope," replied the captive; "but knowing the generous nature of those who love me, I feel assured they will let no opportunity pass by which my rescue may be effected."

"Do you anticipate that they will resort to violence?"

" I cannot say what step they may take," she replied, "though I scarcely think they would resort to such extreme measures when they know the danger of offering resistance in such a case as this. Monsieur Mordaunt has delivered me into the hands of the church, and the only means by which I can be released will be to appeal to those who hold supreme power in all matters of religion; doubtless Monsieur Delmar will seek an early interview with the king, whose influence alone can rescue me from the hands of my cruel persecutor."

"Are you not aware," asked Sister Theresa, "that the king is now engaged in a controversy with his people, that threatens to hurl him from his throne?"

"What may have transpired since my confinement here I know not," replied Julia, "but on the day when I was to have given my hand to Monsieur Delmar, news reached us that there had been tumultuous meetings in Paris, and that the sovereign had been insulted by his subjects. That, however, is of little moment, for it was the general opinion that the troops would soon succeed in restering peace and tranquility in the metropolis."

"That hope is at an end," answered the nun, "for the people, maddened by resistance, have assembled in immense numbers, and according to the news that reached us last, an attack has been made upon the Bastile, which has been levelled with the ground by an enfuriated multitude."

"That," answered Julia, "is a temporary triumph, that will soon be reversed by

a body of well disciplined troops."

"So others thought beside yourself," returned Sister Theresa; " but subsequent events have proved that we are still destined to witness scenes of fearful violence ere this quarrel is brought to an end. In short, the troops upon whom so much reliance was placed, have joined the people, and at the present moment anarchy and bloodshed reign in the once tranquil streets of Paris."

"Is it then thought the monarchy is in danger?" "There is, I fear, but little hope for it."

"Surely the King will not be deserted by all those in whom he placed his

"Many of them," answered Sister Theresa, "have already embraced the popular side, and there is but too much reason to fear that others will adopt the same cause."

"And what do you infer from all this?"

"That you have nothing to expect from an appeal to the King, who is nowalmost powerless."

"Have the disturbances you speak of spread to other places besides Paris?"

" Aye," answered the nun, "and the present aspect threatens us with a general rising throughout France. "Even in the neighbouring town they are preparing to plant what they call the tree of liberty in the public square, and as the soldiers have refused to act, the progress of revolution may be said to have reached us here."

"Merciful Heaven!" cried Julia, "then my brother and Monsieur Delmar will

be compelled to join the rebels!"

"What cause they mean to adopt I know not," replied the nun; "but Monsieur Mordaunt has determined to fight on the side of royalty, and he is to take his departure for Paris as soon as your final determination has been made known to him,"

"He already knows my determination," returned Julia, and nothing will ever

move me from it."

"In that case," sighed Sister Theresa, "I fear you are doomed to perish miserably in this fearful vault."

"Have I then nothing to hope from the abb ss?"

"Nothing," answered the other, "for duty compels her to yield to the demands of Monsieur Mordaunt, and refusal would bring upon her the severest displeasure of those who govern our holy church. She, however, pities you from her very heart, and will meet you in the course of the day, in the hope of persuading you to avert a dreadful fate by yielding to the demands made by one who is in no other way to be prevailed on to restore you to liberty and the

"Tell her then from me," exclaimed Julia, "that if she has no other motive for her visit, she may spare herself the mortification of seeing her good intentions thrown away. I am resolved, and can remain firm, even in spite of the ciuel

torments that I well know will be the consequence of my refusal."

"Are you then totally deaf to all the entreaties of those who are anxious for your rescue?"

"I am."

"Unhappy girl?" exclaimed the nun, "you little dream of the tortures that this obstinacy must bring upon you."

"I know them," answered Julia, "and have sufficient fortitude to endure them

all rather than become the wife of one whom my very soul abhors?"

"Yet it seems Monsieur Mordaunt loves you?"

"It is not love that actuates him," replied Julia, "but a feeling of revenge against both Monsieur Delmar and myself. He knows well the deep affliction into which this proposed mariage would plunge both myself and his rival, and that alone is the motive that has stirred him on to insist upon this unhallowed

"It may be so," returned Sister Theresa, "and yet I should think any fate preferable to the one that must follow the refusal you still persevere in."

"Think you then, sister, I have no hope of being rescued from the doom they pass upon me?"

"It grieves me to say that I see not the slightest grounds for such a hope."

"Perhaps I have been too sanguine," answered Julia, "but the feeling seems to have been inspired by Heaven, and I will still continue to hope so long as the torments I may have to endure spare my reason. If, however, I am mistaken, I shall never regret the determination that led me to prefer a painful death to a sacrifice that must have rendered future existence intolerable."

"Have you not reflected then," asked the nun, "that if your marriage should prove an unhappy one you may obtain a divorce, and then once more regain your

liberty ?"

"I have not thought of it," she replied, "and even if I had it would have weighed nothing with me. In this horrible abode time and opportunity have been afforded me for reflection, yet you still find me as unmoved as when, face to face with Monsieur Mordaunt, I defied him to the fearful extremity he threatened me with."

"But the abbess, who is kind and gentle as a mother, may yet prevail with her

ntreaties."

"Tell her I would rather be spared the pain of her visit."

"Nay, that I will not promise to do," answered the nun, "for she will come hither with a benevolent purpose, and it is not quite certain that she will fail. In that hope, my sister, I take my leave, and my last solemn injunction is that you will meditate earnestly upon this subject ere La Ramee comes hither on her promised visit. Remember, she at least is your friend, and whatever advice she gives is in the earnest hope of saving you from a fate that it is fearful to contemplate."

Sister Theresa then knelt beside the captive girl, and offering up a prayer to Heaven for pardon and assistance in the hour of need, took her leave to proceed to the lady abbess, who was waiting anxiously to learn the final determination of her hapless prisoner. On emerging from the abode of death, the nun,—though much against her inclination,—locked the iron bound door, and made her way across the quadrangle towards that part of the convent set apart for the use of La Ramee. As she was entering, however, a voice from behind pronounced her name, and turning round she perceived Peter approaching her with all the speed that his age would admit of.

"Pardon me, good Sister Theresa," he exclaimed, "for thus interrupting you, but I feel deeply interested in the fate of yonder unfortunate maiden, and would hear from your lips if there is any chance of her accepting the only terms upon

which she can hope to escape her doom?"

"How know you that I have seen her?" asked the nun.

"Because I saw you going towards the vault, and judged that you could have no other motive for paying her a visit, than to endeavour to prevail over her scruples as the only means of saving her from a dreadful fate."

"You judged rightly," she replied, " but Ifgrieve to say, my entreaties have been

uttered in vain."

"She is resolved then to perish."

"Aye," sighed the nun, "and I fear even the entreaties of La Ramee will also be unheeded."

"Julia St. Pierre then prefers a lingering death by starvation to a life purchased by an unwilling consent to become the wife of Monsieur Mordaunt."

"Such indeed is her present determination, and I greatly fear she is not to be

moved from it."

"Then her death is but too surely sealed," exclaimed the porter, "and all the

efforts her lover was about to make will prove of no avail."

"Of what use can they be?" asked sister Theresa, "against the demand of one who, as the law stands, has a right to insist upon her being punished for having broken the vows she made at her betrothal. He knows the abbess dare not refuse him, and, urged by his own dark feelings of revenge, he is resolved to gratify himself by the death of her who has treated his offer with scorn."

"Well," exclaimed Peter, "it is to be feared there is no help for the poor girl but if the sentence could have been postponed a few days, she might have been spared one of the most torturing deaths that human ingenuity could devise."

"What difference?" asked the nun, "could a few days have made in her fate."
"Why surely," he exclaimed, "you must have heard of the disturbances that are at this moment convulsing the kingdom of France, from one end to the other."

"I have; but Monsieur Mordaunt thinks it will not be long, before they are at

an end."

"Aye," murmured the old man, "but Monsieur Mordaunt sides with the royalist party, so he speaks only as he hopes. I have, however, heard other people give different opinions upon the matter, and if they are right, the tumults that are going on are only in their commencement, and a short time may serve to change our form of government altogether."

"But our convents and other religious institutions will remain untouched."

"So you may think," answered the old man, "but I have heard enough to convince me that there is a feeling abroad amongst the people engaged in this insurrection. They call loudly for the abolition of all convents and monasteries, and the general opinion is that they have an eye to the rich endowments by which most of them are supported."

"Surely," exclaimed the terrified nun, "there will be sufficient virtue left in the land to repress lawless violence, if it should be offered to those abodes which are

dedicated to the servants of our religion."

"I would fain hope as you do, sister," exclaimed Peter, "but the truth is, there is no shutting one's ears against the fierce denunciations of the people. At first I had confidence in the protection of four king, but he seems already to have lost all power, and, having been induced to yield in some few matters, the people become more and more extortionate in their demands upon him. In short, he is sorely perplexed what to do, and I suppose the end of it will be, that he must abdicate, to save his own life from the fury of the multitude."

"Then you think we are no longer safe?"

"I am sure we are not," he replied, "for the neighbouring town is in a state of revolt, and an armed body of desperate men would have marched against the convent but for the interference of Monsieur St. Pierre, who with no little difficulty prevailed upon them to postpone their visit till further advices have been received from Paris."

"Monsieur St. Pierre, has, I believe, declared himself in favour of the

insurgents?"

"Both he and his friend Delmar have done so, or before this time their homes would have been burnt to the ground."

"And Monsieur Mordaunt?"

"Sides with the king, and I believe will set out for Paris as soon as the young lady has given her final answer. He has, however, excited the fierce anger of the opposite party, and would stand a chance of being roughly handled if he should happen to fall in their way. But he is aware of his danger, and remains in concealment till he can venture here to know what answer he is to have from Mademoiselle St. Pierre."

"Have they no clue by which to find him?"

"At present they have none," answered Peter, "for they have been to search his house, and not having found him there they are at a loss in what direction next to look for him. However, they are resolved not to be foiled, and it is reported they intend to set fire to his mansion this very night, under an idea that he may have secreted himself somewhere about the premises."

"Holy Virgin!" cried the nun, "then their next visit of plunder and destruc-

tion may be to this place."

"At present I think we are tolerably safe," replied Peter, "for we have the good offices of Monsieur St. Pierre and his friend Delmar, so that we may still be spared the horror of a visit from these fierce men. However, as appearances go at present, we shall not be suffered to remain quiet very long, so we must be prepared for the worst, and make up our minds to submit to our destiny the moment we are called upon to do so."

"Has the king then lost all power and control?"

"The truth is, he has acted foolishly," replied Peter, "and is now like a child in leading strings. Had he been less obstinate at first, much mischief might have been prevented, but the people have since found out how much power they possess, and will no longer obey him as they were wont to do," Have you told the lady abbeas all this?"

"No," he replied, "but I wish you to do so, and also to inform her that it will be well to prepare herself for the worst before many days are over. We shall have the mob here before long, and as resistance would be in vair, it will be better to submit at once, and even to quit the convent at the first demand rather than bring upon ourselves the horrors that have been practised in other places, where the insurgents have been met with a decided refusal."

"But if driven from this home," sighed Sister Theresa, "where else are we to

find an asylum."

"You may well ask that question," exclaimed the porter, "but it is one that I confess myself unable to answer; Fate seems to be against us, and in these mad times we must e'en yield to a power that it is impossible for us to control.'

He turned away as he said this, and the nun entering the portal, pursued her way to the apartments of La Rame, to whom she communicated the startling intelligence which she had just gathered. At first the abbess seemed to be lost in the most painful reflections, but at length, recovering some share of her usual fortitude she abruptly left the room and made her way to the dreary vault in which the prisoner was confined. Julia was kneeling before a rude crucifix when she entered, but she immediately rose, and advancing to meet her, asked in trembling accents if she came to announce that the period for her final interview with Monsieur Mordaunt had arrived.

"Monsieur Mordaunt has not been seen for some hours," she replied, "but doubtless he will find means to evade those who are in search for him, and he will

then present himself to learn your final determination."

"May I ask who the persons are that are in search of him."

"His life," replied the abbess, "is sought by a number of republicans who have doomed him to become the victim of their vengeance for having had the courage to declare himself in favour of a fallen monarch. We also are threatened with a visit from them in this our holy sanctuary, and I must fear these godless men will mercilessly drive us forth into the world from which we had hoped to seclude ourselves for ever."

"And when they come," exclaimed Julia, "they will find that one of your

inmates has perished the victim of cruelty and oppression."

"Do you then blame me?" asked the Abbess, "who am but an unwilling instru-

ment in the hands of those whose commands I dare not disobey."

"On the contrary," answered Julia, St Pierre, "I complain only of him who has forced you to this dreadful alternative. You have been compelled to take upon yourself the part of my jailor, and it is just, therefore, that retribution should fall only upon him who has so mercilessly insisted upon the sacrifice."

"Your words," cried La Ramee, "assure me that you are still resolved to

thwart his views."

"Monsieur Mordaunt," she replied, "has already had my answer, and I then told him that the anticipation of the sufferings that might be in store for me in this world would never influence me in changing my determination. He had doomed me to perish by a dreadful death, but should he be permitted to remain in this country, he shall learn that I suffered without repining rather than purchase existence at the cost of becoming his wife."

" Nay, my daughter, you will yet relent."

"Never!" exclaimed Julia, resolutely. "I can meet death without a fear, and

am now quite resigned to what I know to be my destiny."

"Let me hope," returned the abbess, "that in future reflection you will conquer

"Obstinacy you may call it, holy mother, answered Julia meekly, "but in my own opinion it is nothing more than the just exercise of my own free will. Monsieur Mordaunt insists upon one of two things,—either that I fulfil an engagement unwillingly made on my part, or endure the cruel punishment that is usually allotted to persons guilty of such an offence. I prefer the latter alternative,—bad as it is,—and even now am willing that you immediately close upon me the door

which is not to be opened again till I am numbered with the dead by whom I am

surrounded."

"It must not be so, my daughter," answered the abbess, "for till the very last moment that is permitted, I will give you an opportunity of avoiding a doom from which my soul shrinks with horror. Remember your youth and the pleasures which a long life may have in store for you, and do not throw away a chance of returning to the world."

"You do not recollect then how hateful that world would be to me were I compelled to pass the rest of my days with one of whose basness and malignity I

have had so many proofs."

"These are matters," answered La Ramee, "that my pursuits and retirement do not allow me to form any opinion upon; I, however, see a maiden doomed to death in the prime of youth and beauty, and it appears to me that any sacrifice is to be preferred that will save her from perishing by a painful and liagering death."

"Yet you hear the choice I have made," answered Julia, "and neither your well meant persuasions nor the threats of Monsieur Mordaunt will ever effect any

change in my determination."

"But my daughter, you cannot, surely, have considered fully the nature of the death to which you are here condemned. If your excited feelings induce you to believe that you can resign the enjoyments of the world without a regret, they will soon sink, believe me, under the horrors of this place. Deprived of food—even the coarsest bread and water denied you,—no light but what penetrates through these gratings—no companions but these mouldering remains, it is not possible that human nature can long bear up against such combined miseries, and when too late, you will shriek for mercy in vain, to those whose duty will compel them to turn a deaf car to your entreaties."

"Tis true, holy mother," replied Julia, "my mind, has hitherto been unacquainted with the horrors you describe; but with Heaven's help, I will still

be firm."

"Perhaps you have hopes of being rescued?"

"I have not indulged in so vain a thought," she replied, "for with the best intentions on the part of those who I know are exerting themselves in my favour, I feel assured the doom of death has been sealed, and that in this place I shall yield up my last breath."

"Did not Sister Theresa then tell you that an insurrection has broken out in France,—that the people are everywhere victorious, and that we are every moment in expectation of the arrival of a lawless mob to drive us forth from a home that

has so long been to us the abode of sanctity and peace?"

"Something was said about it," replied Julia, "but I cannot be so selfish as to desire my own liberation when I know at what a fearful sacrifice it must be made by you and this holy sisterhood. Better is it for one to suffer than that many should be driven forth into the world at a time when anarchy and the wildest confusion are reigning. Besides, I am resigned to my fate, and can meet it with humility and firmness."

"But there is no need for you to die."

"There is if I can not live without becoming the wife of Monsieur Mordaunt," she replied.

"Perhaps the aversion you haveformed is without sufficient cause !"

"There is no need for me to enter into an explanation upon that subject now," replied Julia, "for I have before told you what are the grounds of my objection, and the reasons that induced me to decline fulfilling the contract that I reluctantly made with Monsieur Mordaunt. He is, however, fully aware of every particular, and since he has not honour enough to release me from the bonds he placed upon me, I am prepared to pay the forfeit he demands. He professes love, holy mother, yet consigns me to the most horrible of deaths to gratify that feeling of revenge which seems to occupy all his thoughts. And this is the man who asks me to commit my future happiness to him,"

The abbess now finding that further arguments would be useless, retired to her

own apartments, still leaving Julia a prisoner in the cemetery.

In the meantime an officer of the republican troops, Captain Clairville, arrived at the mansion of the St. Pierres, and sought an interview with Victor, who was an old acquaintance. The visitor had a double purpose to serve; he hoped to prevail on Victor St. Pierre to join at once with his tenantry the ranks of the people, and he was also desirous if possible, of discovering the retreat of Monsieur Mordaunt, who had been denounced as an enemy to republican principles



and was looked upon by the popular leaders as a dangerous person to be at large.

"There is no doubt," said the captain, "that his life will be taken if he should be found."

"Let us hope, then, that he will escape whilst there is yet a chance for him," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre.

"How!" cried the officer; "can you wish for the escape of a man who is as much the enemy of yourself as he is of his country?"

"He is my enemy, I know," he replied; "but I bear him no animosity, and No. 9.

should be well satisfied if he was to leave France, and thus assure me that my sister

had no further ground to apprehend violence from him."

"Nevertheless," exclaimed Captain Clairville, "he will not find it an easy matter to escape now that people are looking about for him in all directions. By all accounts he is a restless spirit, and such people as he is, are too dangerous to be at large in times of commotion like these. Besides, he is the foe of yourself as well as your sister and after the mischief he has done is de serving of little commiseration. Your friend, Monsieur Delmar, I dare say, would not be sorry to hear that his rival had perished by the hands of the people.

"Monsieur Delmar owes him no feeling of revenge," replied the other, "and, like myself, would be satisfied with knowing that his rivalry was at an end for

ever."

"And your sister?"

Feels towards him the greatest abhorrence, but would rather that he were permitted to live in order that he may repent the evil deeds he has been guilty of."

"But if he falls there will be an end of him; by all accounts there will be few people to regret his loss. However, that is merely an topinion, and of course I can only guess what may happen if he should fall into the hands of any of our people."

"Have you no power to restrain them?"

"It would be but so much trouble to take in vain to persuade our infuriate people to mercy when they see one whom they know to be an enemy in their hands. In short, Monsieur St. Pierre, I can see no hope for him, though, as it is your wish that his life should be shared, I will igive an onder to that affect. So, for the present, I take my leave, expecting that tomorrow you and your friend will join us at our quarters."

Captain Clairville then took his leave, and Victor immediately proceeded to a small room adjoining, in which were kept the few arms which he happened to possess. Whilst engaged in selecting those which he should require, Monsieur Delmar, using the privilege of long friendship, entered the apartment without

the formality of being announced.

"So," he exclaimed, "this new movement, which was at first regarded as a mere trifling affair, is likely to make an entire change in the destinies of France. Everywhere the people are up in arms, and no where have they been unsuccessful, so that in a short time it is expected monarchy will be at an end in this country."

"And what will they have instead?"

"A republic, of course," answered Delmar, "for though the King has not yet ceased to reign, people say he will soon be obliged to quit his dominions, as a great many of his adherents have already been obliged to do."

"Is there no chance of his friends being able to rally in sufficient numbers

to bring things back to what they were a short time ago?"

"It is quite impossible," answered Monsieur Delmar, "for instead of losing ground the people are gaining more and more strength every day. There is scarcely a town in France that has not already declared in favour of republican opinions, or Louis would not have appeared in the streets, wearing the tricolour cockade which has now taken the place of our old national colours."

"And you," observed Victor, "are still determined to take part in the popular

cause ?''

"I am," he replied, "and it is my most earnest hope that you will follow my

example."

"From the very first my inclination has led me that way," answered St. Pierre, "and within the last half hour I have promised to one of the republican officers to give in my adhesion. Tomorrow, if not at an earlier period, you and I are to join him at head quarters, and you have now found me selecting such arms as may be needed in the event of this struggle lasting longer than was expected."

"There is every probability of our being involved in a long and bloody war," returned Delmar.

"Not a civil war, I hope?"

"No," replied his friend, "we should have foreign enemies to cope with, and most earnestly do I hope we may be able to maintain the honour of our country. In truth, neighbouring states look upon our revolutionary movements with alarm, and rather than see a King dethroned they will sacrifice their wealth and the lives of thousands of their people, rather than permit the growth and increase of liberal opinions. But let them beware of interfering with us, for we know what are our rights, and the children of France will perish rather than yield to foreign dictation."

"Yet there are many who, like Monsieur Mordaunt, will endeavour to restore

the ancient order of things."

"That name," exclaimed Delmar, "reminds me that a strict search has been ordered to be made for him in order that he may be punished for having declared himself in favour of tyranny and oppression,"

"Have they found any clue to him?"

"Strange to say, he has hitherto eluded every effort that has been made," answered Monsieur Delmar. "The whole neighbourhood has been searched in vain; but as it is supposed he is secreted in some part of his house it is to be immediately attacked and burnt, in order that he may be driven forth and destroyed. So, after al my dear friend, you see he will be severely punished for the cruelty with which he has persecuted your sister."

"But surely," exclaimed Victor St. Pierre, "we may pardon him now that

he has it no longer in his power to injure us."

"He has done mischief enough already," answered his friend, "and I for one am not likely to forgive him the torture and suspense with which he has a icted Julia St. Pierre.

"Would you continue your resentment after she has been released from the convent."

"Alas," sighed Charles Delmar, "it is by no means certain that she is now

How! have they dared lay violent hands upon her?"

"They have."

"Who did you obtain your information from?"

"The porter at the convent." "Can we rely upon his report?"

"I have no reason to doubt it," answered Delmar, "and from what he tells me, your sister has been shut up in the cemetery belonging to the convent, where she is doomed to perish by starvation."

"Impossible!" cried Victor; -- "surely they will not dare to put her to

death?"

"They would have dared to do so," replied his friend, "but I am not without hope that this popular outbreak will deter them from proceeding to extremities. "That is if she has not already perished."

"If she has," exclaimed monsieur Delmar, "in a few hours not one stone of that convent shall remain upon another."

"Surely the abbess is no party in this affair," cried Victor, " and if so it would

be unjust to punish her for a crime in which she has taken no share."

"Neither the abbess nor her nuns will be put to death," answered Delmar; " but the confessor, Father Boneffe, and Monsieur Mordaunt will hardly escape my fury if Julia is not delivered safely into our hands."

"I suspect the latter has already escaped us by flight."

"Very probably he may" exclaimed Delmar, "but let him go where he may, I will pursue him with the most unrelenting hatred till he has paid the full penalty of his crimes."

"But suppose Julia still lives?"

"Why then I will leave my vengeance to others, and shall wholly occupy my-

self in the busy scenes which will arise out of the present state of affairs. Next to Julia my country demands my services, and though no soldier by profession, I will make up for the want of practical knowledge by bravery and perseverance. We will fight side by side, my dear Victor, and either purchase liberty for our native land, or die nobly in the attempt."

"Let us rather hope for a speedy peace."

"The hope would be a delusive one," answered Charles Delmar, "and therefore I, for one, shall look forward only to obtain our rights by affording proofs that we Frenchmen will rather die for the establishment of our rights than longer endure the oppressions of misgovernment. We have at length been roused, and now that we have taken arms in our hands, it will too late be seen that the tyranny of our rulers has gone too far."

"Yet it seems the King is willing to yield to the demands that have been made

upon him."

What reliance can be placed in him after what has passed?" asked Delmar.
"He has slightly yielded to the necessity in which he has involved himself, but were we to suffer ourselves to be deluded by hollow promises, a short time would serve to bind our fetters faster than ever."

"Then you think in the end the king will be obliged to abdicate the throne?"

"Aye, and that too before many days are over."

" Suppose he refuses ?"

"Then of course he must take the consequences?"

"What would they be?"

"Judging fro u what is passing around us," answered Delmar, "I should not be surprised if he was to lose his life as a punishment for the evils he has brought upon this unhappy country."

"What!" cried Victor; "put a king to death?"

"Aye," answered his friend; "I own there is something startling in such a suggestion; but a century and a half ago England set us the example, and it cannot therefore be wondered at if we follow it. On the other hand, however, it must be admitted that I sincerely hope such a terrible alternative will not be forced upon us."

"How is it, my dear Charles," asked St. Pierre, "that I never before heard you

give utterance to these republican expressions of your mind?"

"Because," he replied, "it would have been dangerous to publish my opinions at a time when men were tolerably quiet under the injuries they were enduring. Now, however, we may freely speak our thoughts, and scarcely anywhere will you find a man who would not coincide with you in denouncing the injuries we have suffered. Besides," he added, "to confess the truth, I heartily rejoice at the outbreak occurring at this time, since I am in hopes it will afford the means of saving your sister from the designs of Monsieur Mordaunt and Father Boneffe. Already their power to do mischief has passed away, and ere now they have felt that their own retribution is at hand."

"Are you sure Julia is still alive?"

"From what the porter told me a short time since, I have every reason to believe she is," answered Delmar.

"Is she not confined in the charnel house."

'She was," replied his friend, "but as the abbess had been to visit her not very long before, there is reason to believe that the confinement is not a very rigourous one. In fact, I believe she is only detained as a prisoner under the supposition that the terror occasioned by the sentence will compel her to accept the terms proposed by Mordaunt."

"When was he last at the convent?"

"He was to have been there to day," answered Delmar, "but has not been seen since last evening, when he was obliged to go there in disguise for fear of being recognised by any of the people who are looking after him. I am, however, going again presently to see the porter, from whom I receive my information, and if Monsieur Mordaunt should venture to show himself there any more, it will be at the risk of being transferred to the care of the military."

"Surely he will not venture to go there any more."

"That will entirely depend upon whether he is aware of the full extent of his danger," answered Delmar, "for unless he has any friend in communication with him it is impossible for him to know how completely he is beset on all sides."

"Perhaps he has already fled from this place?"

"I rather think not," replied Charles, "for we know the pertinacity with which he has pursued this one object, and for my own part I am of opinion that he will remain secreted in the neighbourhood till we pounce upon the spot where he has found concealment. However, I shall have something further to communicate on my return from the convent, which will be in a short time."

The conversation then turned to other matters, and at the hour appointed, Delmar

set out on his visit to the porter.

## CHAPTER X.

THE FUITIVE ROYALIST. -- A CONFIDENTIAL AGENT. -- THE DISGUISE AND AN ADVENTURE.

By means of his servant, Robert, Monsieur Mordaunt was fully informed of the danger with which he was threatened in the event of a discovery; he knew that death would be the award for his adherence to the cause of a falling monarch, and fearing the violence of an excited people, he sought temporary shelter in an old stone quarry that was situated in a wood about half a league from his mansion. Here he was frequently visited by his confidential agent, both for the purpose of bringing him the necessary supply of food, and whatever intelligence he was able to pick it.

It must not, however, be supposed that Mordaunt had abandoned his designs against Julia. For the present he was obliged to confess himself defeated, but he believed that the termoils which just then agitated France would be of short duration; that the king would soon be restored to all his former power, and that then would be his time to prosecute the claim which he had made for the hand of Mademoiselle St. Pierre. It was in vain that Robert informed him that the monarchy was on the eve of being overturned; he could not conceive it possible that the people would long remain triumphant, and full of that hope he determined to lie closely in his place of concealment, and to hold himself in readinesss for the first favourable opportunity that should open itself to him.

At the period when the events recorded in the last chapter took place, he was waiting anxiously the return of Robert, who at his last visit had reported unfavourably of the state of affairs. Alone, in the deep solitude of the wood, he had opportunity enough to reflect upon the past as well as upon the future, and the uncertainty in which he found himself gave rise to more uneasiness than he had hitherto experienced. At last, however, he heard the signal which had been preconcerted between them, and in another moment Robert was seen scrambling

down the rugged side of the quarry.

"How now, sirrah?" he exclaimed, impatiently. "You have been long on your errand, and I began to fear that through some folly of your own the infuriated people had discovered that there is some communication between yourself and me."

"And so they would, monsieur," he replied, "if I had not taken the precaution to come here by a round-about way. A mob of wild devils followed me to watch which way I was coming, so now you understand the cause of my keeping you so long in suspense."

"Are you sure no one observed you enter the wood?"

"Quite sure, monsieur."

"Have you brought me any news of Julia St. Pierre?"

"Yes; -she is still alive, but Father Boneffe insists upon her being kept in the vault among the dead."

"There is no talk there of any attack being meditated upon the convent of St.

Mary."

"Indeed but there is a great deal of talk about it, though," exclaimed Robert, "Monsieur Delmar has published it abroad that a young female is confined there against her will, and as liberty is the order of the day now, it is expected that an attempt will be made to set her free."

"D\_\_\_n!" exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "I dare not venture there to resist

It would be certain death if you did, monsieur, replied the man, "for I hear they are killing the royalistts in every direction, and they are determined you shall share the same fate if they can only discover where you are."

"Have the scoundrels been to my house since the last time you told me

of ?"

"Yes, they were there this morning," replied Robert, "and pretty havor they made, it seems, for a great part of the furniture was broken to pieces and burnt in the court yard."

"And did none of my people remonstrate?"

"I believe they remonstrated," he replied, "but it was of no use, for the mob only laughed, and said it was nothing to what they intented to do the next time they come."

"They will raze it to the ground."

"Aye, or burnt it down, for it seems there's no chance of the king's friends being able to make head, so that all who favour his cause will be made to suffer

"Where is the king now?"

"At Paris."

" And at liberty?"

"Yes," replied Robert ; "if it may be called liberty, where a king is obliged to say and do every thing exactly as his enemies choose to demand."

"Do they offer him any violence?"
"Aye, sir," he replied, "they insist upon his showing himself publicly several times a day, to be certain that he has not mode his escape, and then insult him with threatening cries. For my own part I wonder he has not before got away from such a rabble."

"It is impossible for him to do so," exclaimed Mordaunt, "for guards have been stationed all round Paris, and if he was discovered attempting to escape, his

life would pay the forfeit of his temerity."

"And why do they wish to keep him in France against his will?"

"Because," answered his master, they are afraid that if Louis should escape to a foreign country, armies would be collected to march here in order to place him upon the throne with the full powers that he before possessed. But they are mistaken, for the king, though too weak for times like the present, would rather reign with kindness and justice than with severity."

"The people don't seem to think so at any rate," exclaimed Robert, "and judging by what they say, I should not wonder if before long they bring him to

trial."

"And on what charge?"

"Aye, that's more then I can tell you;" replied Robert; "but if once they make up their minds to it they'll not the long before they find an excuse. So I was thinking, monsieur, that as you are in as much danger as he is, the best thing will be to seek for safety in some other country till this storm blows

"Where should I find safety.

"In England, where so many thousands of royalists have gone before

"It is the timid only who have gone," replied Monsieur Mordaunt, "and I will not follow their example whilst a chance remains that we may be able to suppress this rebellion that has broken out. Besides, I am resolved to persist in my claim of Madamoiselle St. Pierre, and unless either by persuasions or force she accompanies me, I will never leave this country."

"Then I am afraid, sir, you will before long have reason to be sorry for

staying here."

"How am I to help myself?" demanded his master. "This is the only place that offers me concealment, and were I to leave it even for a moment I might fall into the hands of those who are seeking me."

"But you might get away in disguise."

"There is no disguise that would preserve me from a rigid search in times like these."

"Except the one I have provided for you?"

"What is it ?"

"The habit of a monk," answered Robert, opening a parcel which he had brought with him and displaying its contents to his master. "This," he added. will serve your turn well enough till you reach the coast, where English vessels are cruizing about to take offall who wish to emigrate, and when once on board you may safely throw, aside the disguise, as you will then be among friends."

"Whose thought was this?" demanded Mordaunt.

"Father Boneffe's," replied the other;—"he is very anxious that you should escape, and bade me say that he would follow with Mademoiselle St. Pierre as

soon as he learns where you have gone to."

"I have then one friend left besides yourself," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt. "This is thoughtful of him, and I will avail myself of the opportunity he has offered but not in the way he has proposed."

"Won't you leave France then?"

"Not at present," answered his master, " for this disguise has suggested to me the thought that I may yet make Julia St. Pierre my wife,"

"May I ask what new scheme you have thought of?"

"It is one that I think can scarcely fail," replied his master. "In this monkish garb I can visit the convent of St. Mary, without much fear of being discovered by the maddened populace. Once there, I will have another interview with Julia St. Pierre;-represent the eminent danger in which I am placed, and assure her that my safety can only be secured by her giving me her hand, and thus allaying the fury that her imprisonment has created among the insurgent people."

But they'll still seek to revenge themselves on you for being friendly to the

"In that case," answered Monsieur Mordaunt, "I must once more have recourse to stratagem. I will pretend to abandon the cause of Louis, and shout as loudly as any of them in favour of the republic."

"Do you think they are to be so easily deceived?"

I must take my chance about that," he replied, "but if the thing is managed

with a pretty good face, I think there is no reason to despair of success."

"You might impose upon the generality of the people," replied Robert, "but there are two persons who would not give much credit to your sincerity."

"Humph! you allude to Monsieur Delmar and the brother of Julia St.

Pierre."

"I do :- they are both of them red-hot republicans !- are your enemies ;and will place very little faith in your sudden conversion to the popular side.'

"What need I care for them, if I can only sugged in imposing upon the

"Very true, monsieur," answered Robert; "but if they say a word against you. I don't think there would be much chance of the people placing any reliance on what you say. In short I can see nothing but danger in your venturing among the insurgents, who are at this very moment uttering exclamations of vengeance against you, and would take your life if they could find out your retreat."

"But," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, "the fury of the mob would be immediately dispelled if they can be made to believe that I have forsaken the royal cause."

"Depend upon it, they will not allow themselves to be so easily deceived,"

answered Robert.

"Then you would not have me try the experiment?"

"Certainly not," he replied. "This monk's garb will serve as an excellent disguise to assist you in reaching the sea coast, and when once you are safe in England, I, who can remain here in safety, will find means to convey Mademciselle St. Pierre to you at an early opportunity."

"You would fain persuade me then, that it is possible to leave this country

without being discovered?"

"With proper caution you may do so, certainly," replied Robert, "for no one can suspect who you are, if the character is well sustained. In short, monsieur, so many monks have, within the last few days been driven from their houses by the mob, that it is no uncommon thing to see them making their way towards the coast to escape the dangers they are threatened with here. So now I hope you will leave this place at once, instead of remaining here to fall at last into the hands of the people who have sworn to kill you."

"Psha, they have forgotten me by this time," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, still unwilling to leave unfinished the task he had in view, "The hot-headed fools have plenty of other work on their hands to occupy their attention, and I hope in a few days the king's friends will muster in sufficient numbers to exterminate the

rebels who have dared to rise against his authority."

"Where are the friends to be found?" asked the other.

"There are many thousands of them still in France," replied his master, "and I am much mistaken if neighbouring monarchs do not send a powerful army to assist those who are ready to serve their sovereign. Indeed the example that has been set here is a dangerous one to other nations, and their rulers will, therefore, lose no time in quelling this insurrection, and restoring Louis to the authority of which he has been deprived."

"Other nations may try to do it, sir," replied Robert, "but the people in this country are taking every care to prevent it, by sending a large army to the fron-

tiers."

"Let them do so," exclaimed Mordaunt, "for Paris will then be left unguarded, and that will be the time for the royalists to make a bold effort in behalf of the king. So I shall remain in France, Robert, so as to be in readiness should my services be required in the good cause."

"And you are determined to persist in demanding the hand of Mademoiselle

Pierre."

"Why should I not?" he asked, "when I have her solemn yow to be mine,

and mine only."

"Aye, sir," returned Robert, "but things have taken a great turn since then, and as her brother and Monsieur Delmar have taken the most successful side in this affair, I'm afraid it is nothing better than a shadow that you are pursuing."

"And you would have me resign her without an effort?"

"As for that, monsieur," replied the other, "you know I was willing enough to give you my assistance whilst there was a chance of doing any good. Now, however, you are running into great danger, and it is my duty to warn you against staying in this neighbourhood any longer."

" All places are alike dangerous to me, and therefore I shall remain where

am.

"But suppose your pursuers should happen to discover the place of your

"In that ease," answered Monsieur Mordaunt, "they will find that I am resolved to sell my life dearly. With this sword, a dagger, and a brace of pistols, I will defend myself to the last, let their numbers be what they may,"

"Then this disguise will not be made use of?"

"Not for the purpose that you intended," replied his master, "but I will put it on to aid me in a plan that I have just thought of. In fact I have determined to visit the convent of St. Mary, that I may learn from the lips of Father Boneffe, how my cause is likely to proceed."

"Depend upon it he will advise you to leave this dangerous neighbourhood

without loss of time."

" I shall hear if he has any good reason to advance for such advice," exclaimed



A MONA'S ROBE IS GIVEN TO MORDAUNT FOR DISGUISE.

Monsieur Mordaunt, " and shall then be at liberty to follow it or not, as I may

happen to think proper."

Whilst he was saying this he put on the monkish garb that had been brought for him, and drawing the cowl over his head so as to conceal his countenance, desired Robert to remain where he was till his return, as it would lead to suspicion should they happen to be seen together.

I will obey you sir," replied the man, "but shall come in search of you if your leng absence should give me reason to suspect that any mischief has taken

Place." No. 10. "You will at least remain here three hours," exclaimed Monsieur Mordaunt, and if by that time I have not returned, you may repair to the convent and ascertain from the confessor if I am there. However, no danger is to be apprehended, for this garb has so completely disguised me that I might pass through a crowd of my

enemies without any one suspecting who I am."

During the time he was saying this, he and Robert clambered up the rugged quarry, and, having with no little difficulty succeeded in gaining the level surface, he took his leave of his faithful follower, and pursued his way towards the convent of St. Mary. For some time after he had left, Robert remained listening in breathless silence, in order to hasten to his assistance if any signal of danger should be given; all, however, remained quiet, and, at a loss how to pass away the time Robert was about to stroll through the wood, when the tramp of footsteps was heard, and in a minute or two afterwards a military officer and three or four soldiers made their appearance from a path that led into one which Monsieur Mordaunt had just before pursued. Robert was thus convinced that no harm had befallen his master, and therefore when the men came up he was tolerably composed, though well aware that he would be strickly questioned for the purpose of drawing from him any information that he might be able to give respecting the fugitive they were in search of.

"Hollo, sirrah!" exclaimed Captain Clairville; "why are you loitering about here when an able-bodied man like you ought to be assisting in the glorious strug-

gle that is going on?"

"There are many ways of assisting," answered Robert. "and how do you know but I am looking after some of the king's supporters, who it is said are

skulking and hiding themselves in all sorts of queer places."

"If that is the business you are on, it is the same as ours," replied the officer. "Have you been successful, or, like, us had all your trouble for nothing?"

"I've neither seen nor heard of 'em."

"Have you been looking about this place long?"

- "Quite long enough to sat sfy myself that there's no one concealed himself in this wood."
  - "Have you examined the quarry?"

"I have."

"And without success?"

"Yes, there's not a soul there, or I must have seen him."

"Are there no traces of any one having been there?"

"Oh yes, sir," replied Robert, "there are the marks of a good many footsteps, but they may have been left by persons that have been down on the same errand that took me there."

A pause in the conversation now took place, during which one of the men whispered to his captain, and by the glances that were occasion dly directed towards him, Robert could see perfectly well that he was the subject of their conference. At length it finished, and, Captain Clairville, to the no small consternation of the person to whom he put the question, inquired if he was not in the service of Monsieur Mordaunt, of whom they were in search as an enemy of the new constitution which had been established. To deny any knowledge of him would have been a dangerous experiment, and after a moment's hesitation, Robert stammered out:—

"I was in his service not long ago, but when I found that he was not on the side of the people I left him, so that where he is now I know not."

"When did you see him last."

"Yesterday," replied Rober, stammering.

"Where?"

"Near his own house."

"Did you make no attempt to seize him as an enemy of the state," demanded the officer, regarding him with a scrutinizing look.

"I would have made him my prisoner for the sake of the reward that is given

for the apprehension of all royalists," answered Robert; "but when he saw approach he took out a brace of loaded pistols, and threatened to shoot me advanced another step."

"Why did'nt you call for assistance?"

"I shouted as loudly as I could," he replied; "but there was no one within hearing, and Monsieur Mordaunt taking the opportunity, ran off, and made his escape."

"Did he go into his house?"

"No sir, there were soldiers in it at the time and he made off in quite a different direction."

" Towards this wood perhaps?"

"Yes," he replied, " and that was what made me come here to look for him. But I have searched every part of the place, and you may take my word for it he is no where about or he would have been safe enough in custody before now."

" And this you declare to be the truth ."

"Most solemnly I do, captain," replied the man, "and if you have any doubt let some of your men make a search, and if they should find Monsieur Mordaunt, I'll be content to be made a target for the bullets of your soldiers."

At a signal given by Captain Clairville the men went away in different

directions, and the officer remained alone with Robert.

"Do you happen to know," he asked, "of any place where your late master

may have sought concealment?"

"I do not, indeed, sir," repiled Robert, "for he has only lately returned from abroad after a long absence, and has not been to any house since he came back, except Monsieur St. Pierre, and he is not likely to have gone there now, for as they have taken different sides, he could not expect to find shelter there."

"I have just seen Monsieur St. Pierre," answered the officer, "and he is as

much at a loss to guess where the fugitive is as any of us."

" Excellent!"

"How fellow!" exclaimed Captain Clairville, "are you glad that an enemy of

his country is likely to escape."

"No," replied the other, correcting himself, "I am not glad on that account, but for the sake of Monsieur St. Pierre, who would have be an in danger of losing his life upon proof that h: had given shelter to a royalist fugitive."

"Monsieur St. Pierre has not seen him," replied the captain, "but he seems to be pretty well satisfied that the man we seek is still lurking in the neighbour-

hood."

"I can't agree with him there, for Monsieur Mordaunt knows the danger he would be in here, and you may depend on it he has made the best of his way to the sea coast, as so many other people like himself have done. Indeed, now I think of it, he has friends in England, and its more likely than not that he has gone to seek an asylum among some of them."

"He will have but a poor chance of escaping if he is not already gone," observed the captain, "for none are at present allowed to leave the French coast, lest they should join the armies of the enemy and assist in an attempt to overthrow

the government which we have formed for ourselves."

"And yet," exclaimed Robert, "I should have thought it better to let them go about their business, for I'm sure we don't want people here who are against

"The truth is we have nothing to fear whilst we have our eyes on them," answered Captain Clairville. "As foes to ourselves and our laws we have every right to secure ourselves against their evil machinations, and how can we do that so effectually as by sending all those who are not for us to the guillotine?"

"If you do that," exclaimed Robert, "all the nations in Europe will join them-

selves in a league against us."

"And what need France care for all the nations on the earth?" demanded the captain. "Are not our people bold and resolute in the maintainance of their just rights, and shall we, who have just roused up at the call of freedom, submit to the

dictation of foreign power.—No, no, we know our own strength, and in a few weeks shall be prepared to take the field against as many enemies as may presume to call us to an account for the method we take to secure our liberty. So death 22y I to all who would support the tyrant on his throne, and most earnestly do I hope Monsieur Mordaunt may soon receive the reward he so richly deserves."

May I ask sir, why you have formed such a mor.al hatred against my late

master?"

"It is because he bears the character of a coward."

" "A coward !"

"Aye, has he not persecuted and oppressed Mademoiselle Julia St. Pierre for no other reason than that she preferred some other person."

"She was bound to wed him by a solemn oath."

"And luckily for her she is released from the oath by the new order of things," answered Captain Clairville.

"The rulers of the church will not think so."

"The rulers of the church must submit to a power that can, and may, soon pull them down from their high places," answered the officer. "Nay, this very night they will see how little respect we pay them, for if Mademoiselle St. Pierre is not returned, on a demand being made, we shall attack the convent, and in that case to-morrow will not see one stone left upon another."

"And is all this to be done merely to serve the brother and lover of the young

lady."

"It will be done," answered the captain, "to prove to the world that, as we have taken up arms in the cause of liberty we are determined not to let oppression exist in any shape. This girl had every right to dispose of her hand to whom she pleased, and because she was about to do so, Monsieur Mordaunt must needs throw her into the power of a cruel law that condemns her to death without even the formality of a trial."

"Are you sure she is not already dead, monsieur."

"I have been assured she still lives," replied Captain Clairville, "but should it preve that she does not, all those who were concerned in the transaction will be made to suffer for their heinous offence. Father Boneffe, I hear, has been the chief instrument in the hands of Monsieur Mordaunt, and if the girl has perished, it is not even his priestly office that will shield him from our vengeance."

"And the abbess!"

"Has shown some little kindness to her prisoner, and we shall, therefore, be content to send her and her nuns to seek an asylum somewhere else."

"Won't the world call that sacrilege, and contempt for our religion?"

"We care little for what the world may think of it," replied Captain Clairville. People have at length found out that these convents were the haunts of idleness and hypocrisy; that large sums of money have been bestowed upon them which have been applied to any thing but religious purposes, and that, as the foundations are useless, the sooner they are done away with the better. Besides, the wealth that has been accumulated in them will be useful to the state in its present emergency, and the nuns and monks must therefore yield up their stores for the service of those who are rescuing the country from the most servile slavery."

By this time all the men who had been sent in search of the fugitive had return-

ed, and the captain addressing himself to to them, said,-

"I see you have not succeeded in finding Monsieur Mordaunt, but I would know if you have seen any thing that would lead to the conclusion that he has been here within the last few hours."

"He has been here certainly," replied one of the men, "for upon searching a small recess in the quarry I found a bottle about half filled with wine, and this

basket with a few fragments of victuals."

They may have been taken there for some one else," observed Robert.
"That story," replied the man, "would have done very well if nothing else had been found; but I also picked up this handkerchief in the same place, and as it bears the initials H, M, in the corner, there is very little doubt that it belongs to

Henri Mordsunt. Look, captain," he added, "how confounded the fellow seems at the discovery we have made. His countenance betrays his guilt, and upon the evidence we have got I accuse him of having aided and abetted a traitor to the good

"What answer have you to make to this charge?" demanded the captain, sternly."

"Simply that I know nothing of the person you speak of."

"His denial will not do," exclaimed the accuser, "for though he professes to take part with the people, I believe him to be nothing else than a rank impostor."

"Upon what ground do you believe me to be an impostor?"

"Because you have not once been seen in assisting the people in obtaining their rights. When we were searching your master's house you refused to lead us in search of him, and told us he was not in the place, though I believe he was concealed there all the while."

"What am I to understand from all this, Jacques?" asked the captain.

"That, as a citizen of France," he replied, "I demand his immediate arrest, on

a charge preferred by myself, of having assisted to conceal an enemy."

"Take him then into your own custody," exclaimed Captain Clairville, and tomorrow a strict examination shall be entered into to prove whether he is guilty.

"Am I to be deprived of my liberty," cried Robert with terror, "on such trifling

proof as this?'.

"It is my duty not to let any traitors against their country escape," answered Captain Clairville, "and to confess the truth, I have my suspicions that you know more about Monsieur Mordaunt than you have at present thought proper to admit. In a few hours the charge will be thoroughly investigated, and in the meanwhile you had better reflect whether it will not be advisable to save your own life by confessing where your master is concealed."

"I have told you his place of concealment is unknown to me; and when you

arrived here just now I was engaged in looking for him."

"That's false," exclaimed Jacques, "for I believe it is you who brought him

the food and wine."

"In that case," said the captain, "two of you had better take the prisoner to our head quarters, whilst the others remain here to watch for the return of Monsieur Mordaunt. He will be here again soon, I dare say, and it will be your duty to make him your prisoner; but remember, if he should offer to escape or resist, you must shoot him rather than suffer so dangerous an enemy to be at large."

"Wouldn't it be better to put an end to him at once, captain?" suggested

Jacques.

"Not if it can be avoided," answered Clairville, "for the punishment that awaits him is a terrible one, and may prove a useful warning to others, who, like himself, would fight against the liberties of their native land."

"But why should you make me your prisoner?" demanded Robert, "when I told you at first that I had left the service of Monsieur Mordaunt because he and I had taken different sides in this outbreak. I am no royalist, and yet you

would make me suffer as if I had been fighting for the King."

"The truth is we believe not a word that you have been telling us," replied Captain Clairville. "If we have no positive proof of it there is sufficient reason for supposing that you have been in communication with your master during the time he has been concealed, and that would hardly have been the case if you had not entertained the same opinions that he does. However, be that as it may, the affair will be investigated by our commanding officer, so that you will have strict justice done you, which ever way the decision may happen to be."

"Aye," exclaimed Jacques; "and if you are sent to the guillotine you'll have the consolation of knowing that you richly deserve it, and that many a better man

has gone there before you. "Perhaps it may not be long before your own turn comes," retorted the prisoner; "for these are dangerous times, and men that consider themselves safe one day, are the next sent to suffer death for being merely suspected."

"There's exclaimed Jacques, "I knew he was a royalist, and now he has proved it by railing against the excellent laws that the people have just made. I shall report the words he has just spoken, and if that don't setttle his business I don't know what will."

"You have but one chance of getting out of this serious dilemma," said Captain Clairville addressing the prisoner. "Tell me where your master is to be found, and I will undertake to use my influence to procure your immediate release."

"I'll not do it, even to save my own life," exclaimed Robert, in a tone of deter-

mination.

"Indeed! then if he has no other friend he has at least found one in you."

"He is my master," answered the other, "and whatever faults he may have been guitty of, I have never had reason to complain of him. Besides, I don't like the character of a traitor, and would rather die by the hands of the executioner than owe my life to the betrayal of my master."

"Come, there is some little honour in you," exclaimed the captain, and I should

like, if possible, to save you from the fate you are likely to meet."

"You have heard my answer, "replied the other, and I shall never change it,

either for threats or persuasion."

"In that case, Jacques," exclaimed the officer, "you and your companion will take him to a place where he will be kept in safety till the time comes for his examination before our commanding officer. And you," he added addressing himself to the other two men, will remain here in concealment to await the return of Monsieur Mordaunt. If he should come as I expect, seize upon him before he has time to offer any resistance, and let me know as soon as you have conveyed

him to a place of safety."

The two men immediately placed themselves behind some bushes; Robert was led away by those who had him in their custody; and Captain Clairville being thus left alone, pursued his way towards the house of Monsieur St. Pietre in order to learn what had occurred during the interval of their last interview, and to concert their schemes for the speedy restoration of Julia. On reaching the house he found St. Pierre, and having narrated as briefly as possible the occurrences that had just take place, inquired if anything had been heard of Monsieur Mordaunt while he had been absent.

"We have no certain information," replied St. Pierre, "but one of my servants, who has been on the watch, informs me that a person habited as a monk, enterred the convent about an hour ago. That he did not belong to the religious fraternity, however, seems pretty certain, for my informant tells me that his gown flew open and discovered a brace of pistols in his vest, and we may therefore fairly surmise that he is no other than Monsieur Mordaunt in disguise."

"Then he has entered a trap," [exclaimed Captain Clairville, "that he will not

be likely to escape from."

A search was immediatly commenced throughout the entire building, which at length terminated in the discovery of the person whose villanous designs were so apparent. Mordaunt, however, would not suffer himself to be taken without offering an obstinate resistance, but finding that he must ultimalely fall into the hands of his assailants, he placed one of the pistols to his head, and the next moment he was stretched mortally wounded on the earth. Full of rage at the defeat of all his long cherished hopes, he would have discharged the remaining weapon at his adversary, but ere he could do so the little strength he had failed him; his arm sank, and after a short convulsive struggle the wretched man ceased to exist.

All obstacles to the marriage of Julia St. Pierre were now removed, and being immediately released from the revolting dungeon, she quickly found herself in the arms of her lover. It was then proposed by St. Pierre that no further delay should take place, and a procession being formed, the bridal party proceeded to the convent chapel where the nuptials were solemnized by a monk belonging to a neighbouring monastery who happened to be present















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